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THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO COMPUTER GAMES

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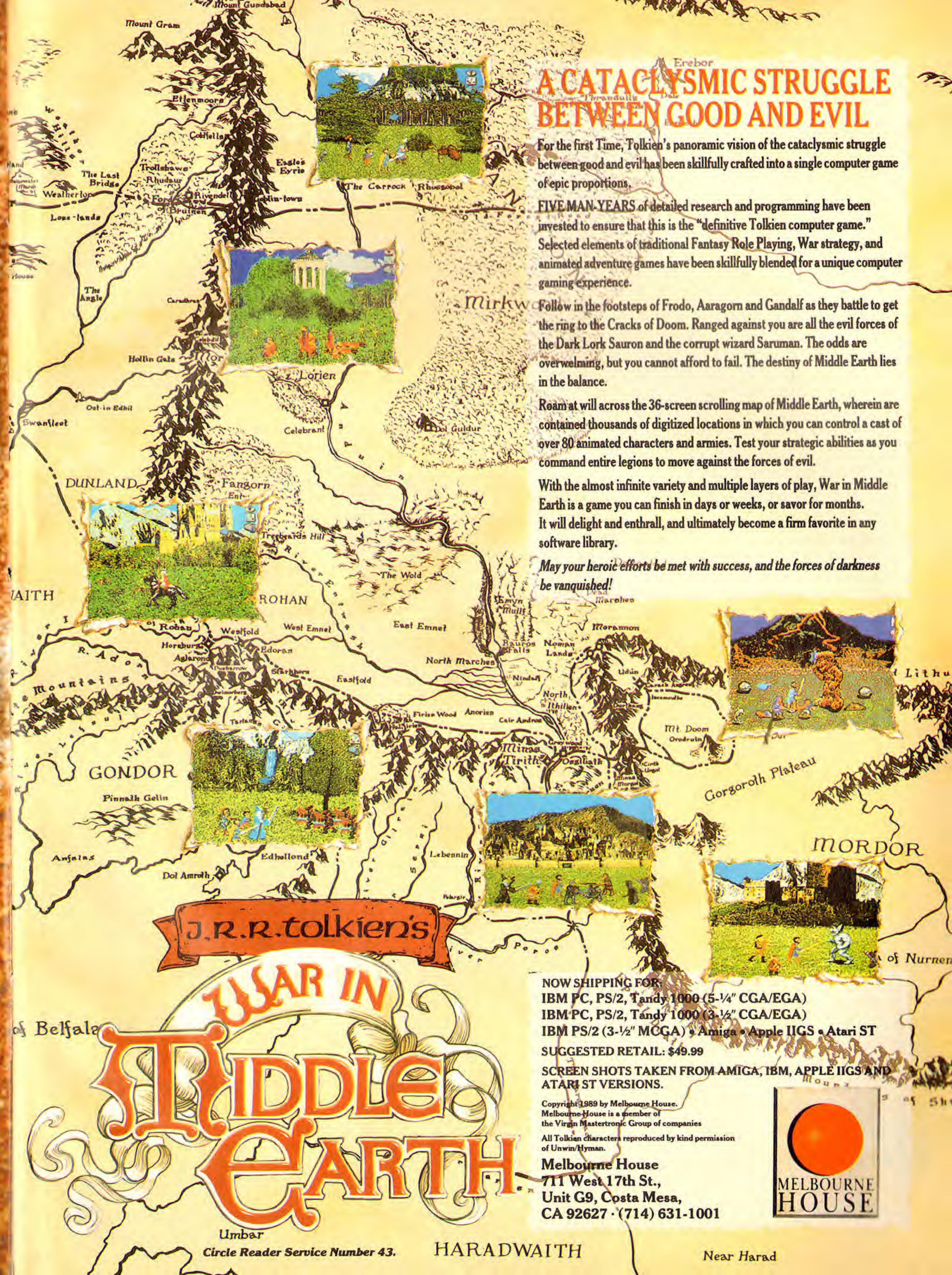
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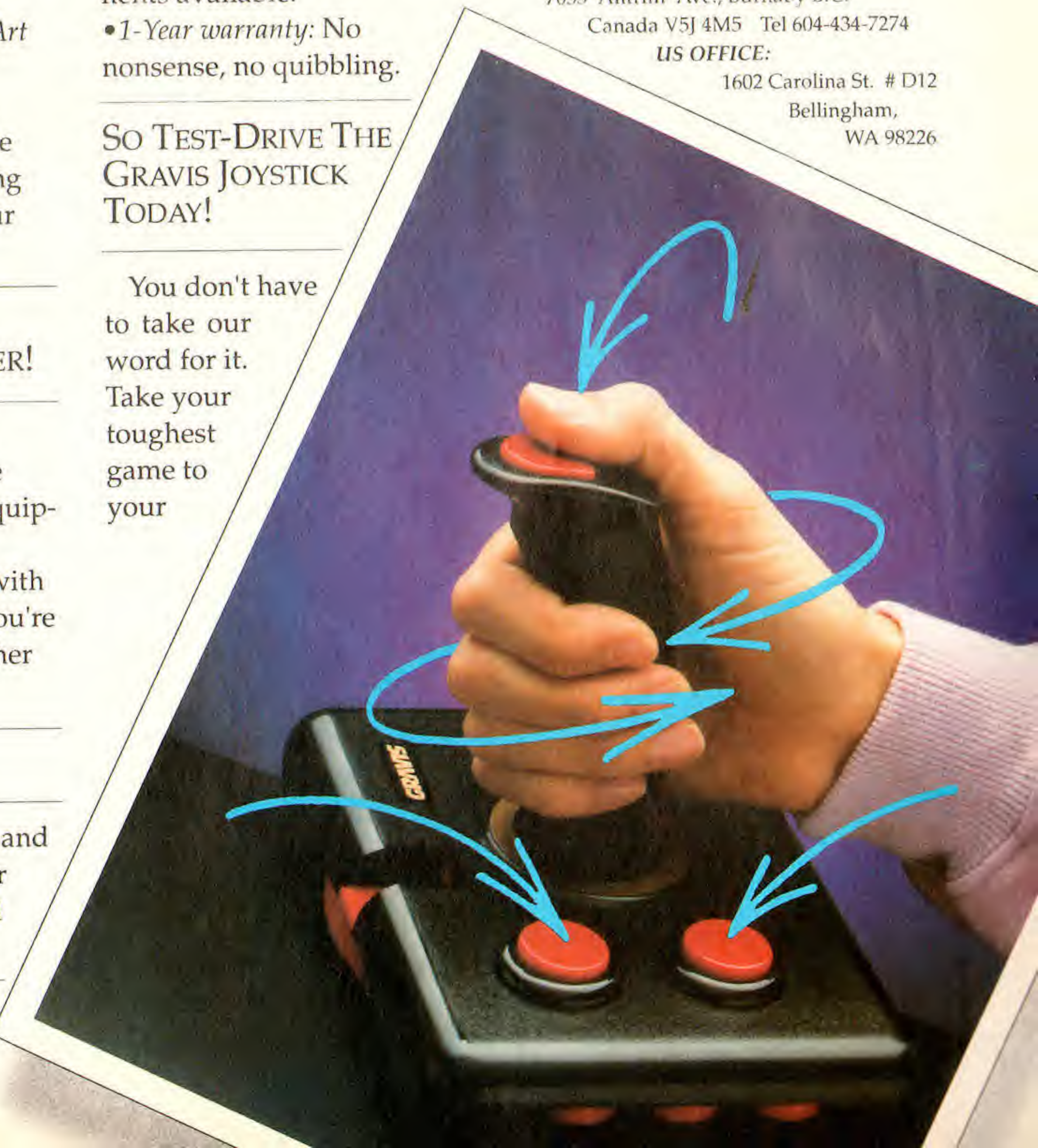
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Editor's Page

A New Staffer Says Hi

As a new editor at **Computer Play**, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to all our readers.

I was offered this position on the strength of my game designing and programming skills, and I have a long history in both fields. I've played more computer games than most since I started in the early seventies on a system 360. There weren't that many games around then, and the first computer game I was exposed to was Panchet. We played this game on Telex terminals, and each move was printed out on rolls of paper about the size of paper towel rolls. The only storage we had for these terminals was punched paper tape that was about an inch wide. The most sophisticated terminal we had was a CRT, it even had a cassette deck for storage. Hot stuff huh? On this terminal, we could even play horse racing, and black jack with no graphics at all.

So about this time many of us started to program our own games. Such memorable games as tic tac toe, dice, and checkers (played with other human opponents only). We weren't exactly original. We also spent a lot of time on the phone trying to convince other people with 360's to trade games with us.

Things have changed considerably since. A computer that was the size of a refrigerator has now been reduced in size enough to fit on my desk. Software, and programming languages have evolved to the point where programming is faster and the quality of the product is much higher.

So what qualities do I look for in a game to consider it good? Ease of play, good documentation, and fun. By ease of play, I don't mean that I want to win the game the first time I play it. I mean that the controls should be easy to use and understand. The game should invite the player to explore it by making the first part of the game more of an introduction to the controls, and the game concept. By good documentation, I mean that the enclosed booklet should be clear to understand and should be complete; some games you can't give the store

away in the booklet though. By fun I mean enjoyable, and everyone has their own idea about that. So let's just say not a pure number accumulation type of a format, but a goal oriented type of game.

The game industry is getting larger every year, both board and computer. Every convention I have been to recently has been larger than the previous both in attendance by the public and the number of manufacturers. As machines get more sophisticated and game companies get bigger, the possibilities of tapping new markets becomes more real. New software for just about every type of person is coming out: some simulations, some games, and some creative aids.

The software entertainment market will only get bigger over the next few years. As computers become more accessible to younger people, and more mature people realize the potential of these machines the opportunities to supply their software needs will grow.

I'm happy to be part of this magazine. Few people get to work in a field that they enjoy, and gaming is an especially fun area to work in. Another thing about working for **Computer Play** is that we have a very professional staff, and it will not be very difficult for me to maintain the quality with their participation.

As for me, I would like to see more hints from readers on how to get by barriers in adventure type games, or how to improve one's game in an arcade type of a game. I also want to see more reviews per issue, and more general coverage such as in our Industry News column.

I am looking forward to maintaining the quality of this magazine, and even improving on it. There's a lot of work to be done every month, since the quantity of new games is on the rise. So I'll be keeping you informed of the games that are worth playing, and warning you of the ones to stay away from. You'll be hearing from me in future issues, and I hope to be hearing from you.

Berdj Betchakdjian

Letters & hints

Send letters to the editor to: **Computer Play**, 3321 W. Dempster, Skokie, IL 60076

Definite Opinion

Responding to James Hale's letter, I think you should keep the NINTENDO reviews and ads in your magazine. I own both a NINTENDO and an APPLE IIGS, and I liked your magazine enough to subscribe to it. If you don't like a magazine, don't buy it. You shouldn't change your magazine for one person and ruin it for all the others who like it just the way it is!
Matt Stevenson
Brookings, OR

Direct Observations

I'd like to start this long, rather involved letter with general praise for **COMPUTER PLAY**, it's the only computer magazine I buy. However I want to give you numerous constructive remarks I hope you make a response to.

I am tired of hearing complaints about the scorecard, it's seriously blown out of proportion and I wouldn't care if it were completely deleted. (That might add more space for useful stuff) The reviews are much more important, which leads me to my next point: pack in as many reviews as possible, even if it means shortening some of those distended reviews. The more reviews we see, the better the chance we'll see the current review of the game we're interested in buying. That is the most important item you can provide - the maximum numbers of up-to-date reviews.

Save Nintendo and Channel 3. They are worthy of reviews just as Amiga and Atari are. I see you already are cutting down the space they get while there is still a wealth of Nintendo games waiting to be mentioned. Many "real computer" owners also own a Nintendo or Sega system. Your coverage of both "real computers" and video-games makes the magazine more appealing to me, members of Bulletin Board systems around me, and undoubtedly those like me all across the country. None of us would like Nintendo removed from the magazine. (notice, we aren't calling for Amiga and Atari's removal!)

Your Industries News and Views column is very useful, as is the address section. Continue packing as much news as you can dig up into the column and try to find more 1-800 phone numbers - long distance is expensive!

Why isn't there a Question and Answer area? It's a very basic, but very useful idea. Another question I have is why you have not reviewed any Titus software? They have released many new, interesting looking games, yet you continue to avoid mentioning them. Then, are there any plans to do a story on the most inexpensive places to purchase games? EVERYONE would enjoy that.

I'm holding off my subscription check until I see that the Nintendo column expands and stabilizes as well as until a host of other, smaller problems I have mentioned are smoothed out. Despite the obvious problems, I still feel this is a good game magazine with excellent potential.

Michael Slater
Murrysville, PA

For a review of Off-Shore Warrior from Titus, see page 14.

More Comments and Suggestions

I'm an avid fan of computer games. I was pleased with your September issue and am contemplating a subscription.

Now for some comments, and suggestions:

- 1) More Amiga game reviews. The Amiga is surely one of the best computers for games. It may not have as many games as the Apple, or C-64, but the ones it does have are very high quality.
- 2) Make your magazine more balanced. Have sports, role playing, strategy, arcade, etc., sections per month instead of focusing on one topic per month.
Scott Westbrook
Tucson, AZ

Who's Number One?

When I was reading the letters in the September issue of **COMPUTER PLAY**, I noticed that somebody wrote that your Industry News & Views was wrong about the Commodore Amiga being the number one selling computer. They wrote that the Atari ST was the number one selling computer. Well they are wrong. The leading microcomputer journal in Germany, Chip, publishes each month sales figures and according to this microcomputer journal, Commodore is the number one selling computer.

Travis Roy
Montpelier, VT

Double Dare

Your magazine rules, and it is great. You have Nintendo in your Magazine, and I think you should have Sega in there too. I have Sega and the Commodore 64. You reviewed Double Dragon for Nintendo, so why not review Sega's Double Dragon. Nintendo vs Sega!
Dennis Alexander
Livonia, MI

Oops, Wrong Photo

Just a couple of comments on your magazine and in particular your review of Superstar Ice Hockey which appeared in the NOV. 88 issue.

First, I would like to say that I really enjoyed reading your magazine and I was very impressed overall. Especially your review of Superstar Ice Hockey. I think the article itself was correct in all of its assessments, however, the photo which accompanied the article was obviously not one of Superstar Ice Hockey. In fact it was one of NINTENDO's Ice Hockey.

I hope this was just an oversight and not done on purpose as the photo does not do the graphics of Superstar Ice Hockey justice. (I have an EGA card and MULTISYNC monitor)

Although this error left the review a bit tainted, I still plan to subscribe to your magazine. I hope you continue to do reviews of sports games and carry sports game advertising as I am a sports game fanatic.

Jon Bye
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

You're right Jon, and it was a mistake, not intentional. Thanks for the help.

Different View

I read the review of Gunship in your November issue of **COMPUTER PLAY**. I thought the review had several faults I would like to point out:

- 1) Your reviewer gave the product an 8 for realism which might appear to be a very high rating at first glance but when you consider it is barely average compared to many of the other games reviewed by your magazine I think it is grossly underrated. I own over 10 top rated military simulations on my IBM compatible and I can vouch for the unprecedented accuracy in Gunship which I have yet to see matched except for F-19 Stealth Fighter, another top product by Microprose.
- 2) Playability is a very subjective rating and considering the game was tested on floppies with the slower IBM PC/XT and in CGA graphics mode the rating of 7 is an indicator of nothing but the author's personal impressions which he got based specifically on his machine. For example, loaded from a hard drive, the game loads in a matter of seconds. The comprehensive tutorials included in the manual make learning how to operate the game quick and painless.

- 3) I think that your rating system of packaging is absurd and has no place in your magazine. First of all the consumer can judge the package for himself when he buys the game and secondly I really don't think anyone cares what the reviewer thinks of the box.

Another magazine which conducts consumer surveys whereby the readers rate the latest games over a period of months rated Gunship consecutively month after month second or third of 50 of the top games. I think that shows that the reviewer is in the minority with his lack of enthusiasm for this game.

Adam Goodman
Fair Lawn, NJ

Which Computer?

I have received the November Issue of **COMPUTER PLAY** and it is the best computer magazine I've seen. But my question is: I am looking for a powerful 16 bit computer. Can you tell me which one is the best? Could it be the Apple IIGS vs. Commodore Amiga? What I look for in a computer is excellent graphics, and extremely good sounds. I own a Nintendo and your Channel Three section is fantastic. Also your way of reviewing games is easy to understand. You get right to the point telling what makes the game good, or bad! Keep up the great work.

Ian Wijaya
Princeton, NJ

General Tips

I would like to give some general tips on playing computer and home video games to your readers. Take notes on what kind of video games you are playing. Make a pattern, and stick to it when you start to play your game. Practice! Practice! Practice! The more you practice, the better you'll play. Keep records on your scores. This is something like a report card on how well you're doing on the video game. Keep these tips in mind and you'll be a great video game player on the home games and coin-ops.

Ples E. Coleman, Jr.
Chicago, IL

Industry News & Views

By Rusel DeMaria

Now that the major Christmas rush has passed, it's time to look at the year to come. Many companies are planning their strategies for 1989 and even into 1990. Some companies have just announced new products at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, others are in planning stages of games and simulations to come. Generally, this is a slower time of year for game releases, but no one will go hungry. There's plenty on the shelf.

First, an observation: Ancient Japan has become one of the popular themes in games recently released and soon to be available. There have long been an assortment of karate and ninja arcade games, but now such notable companies as Cinemaware, Infocom, and Microprose have announced titles dealing with the land of the samurai. Koel, too, already has its Japanese title in progress. All of these titles will take the player into the culture of ancient Japan and, perhaps, into the mindset of bushido—the ancient code of the warrior. With the Japanese buying more and more of our assets, perhaps it makes some sense to get to know them better.

Was it coincidence, or just great timing? It was one or the other when Microprose released their **F-19 Stealth Fighter** game on the same day the Air Force finally announced the real article. According to a Microprose spokesperson, there are more than a few similarities between their computer simulation and the real thing. For one, even though the official name of the Air Force plane is F117A, according to Microprose, most insiders still refer to it as the F-19. Both planes feature a single seat cockpit, twin engines which can be concealed, and something called a twin boom lifting design (which has something to do with the way the plane lifts off). Anyway, I think the Microprose version is as close to the real thing as I want to get.

On the subject of authenticity, Mindscape is planning some very appealing new games for us. Top among them is **Aussie Games**, a collection of six authentic down-under sports. Are you ready for beer bottle shoot? How about dry river boat races, beach football, marlin fishing, and, of course, boomerang toss? But the one I am most curious about is the belly whack competition. It sounds like something I'll be glad I'm doing on a computer. Also from the down-under connection: **Aussie Joker Poker**, a card game that allows you to play both player and/or dealer, and play with up to 90 players! I'd like to see a game with 90 players huddled around one computer.

Mindscape is also starting the year with a great collection of other titles: **Hostage** puts you in control of a six-person special forces team whose task it is to rescue hostages from a captured embassy. In this game for the Amiga, Atari ST, PC, or C64, you can observe the action from several unique angles—from above, from below, from inside the embassy, and more. Apple IIGS and Mac versions will be coming later in the year. Or, if you're not ready for the special forces, perhaps you'll like a visit to the **Combat Course**, a do-it-yourself boot camp with 4 levels of play and build your own obstacle courses, for the Amiga, Atari ST, PC, and C64. Or, if you want to get a different kind of training, try **Sgt. Slaughter's Mat Wars**, a wrestling simulation for the PC and the C64. Work your way up the circuit from the grimy dives to the glitzy main arena. Finally, Mindscape doesn't want to ignore more conventional sport, so they've introduced **International Team Sports** from SportTime. This game features athletes from 31 other countries competing against you in volleyball, water polo, soccer, swimming, and track.

Epyx held onto some secrets until CES, where they announced seven new titles: **Technocop** (C64, Amiga, Atari ST, Apple II, PC) and **Skate Wars** (C64, Amiga, Atari ST, PC) both take us into dangerous future worlds. In Technocop, your task is to bust the bad guys in a world of high tech toys like your V-MAX Twin-Turbo Interceptor (a vehicle that would make Knight Rider jealous), complete with an arsenal of weaponry and an on-board computer system. Lots of driving thrills and head to head confrontations with the criminal element. In Skate Wars, on the other hand, you play a gladiator in a future tradition that combines magnetic skates, metal-studded balls, and lots of danger. The million dollar salaries are fine, but don't expect to spend it all. Death is only a spiked ball, bottomless pit, or any one of a number of hazards away. If the arena and the V-MAX aren't enough, you can take to the seas in a sophisticated submarine in **Undersea Commando** (Amiga, Atari ST). Your job is to seek and destroy more villains.

Data East is getting into sports. They've signed an agreement with Scott Orr, the developer of such fine sports titles as **Pete Rose Pennant Fever**, to develop a new line of football, basketball, and baseball games for all computer formats. **Platoon** should be out by now on the PC with versions on the way for Amiga, Apple II, and Atari ST. **Super Hang On** will be Data East's first Mac game. Also introduced at CES: **Bad Dudes** (gang fighting on Nintendo), **RoboCop** for C64, Amiga,

and Atari ST, and **Guerrilla War** for C64, Amiga, Atari ST, and PC.

Discovery told me about some upcoming, though still untitled games, that they will be introducing. One is a military game described as a "military olympics". Also look for a new sports title, and a business game that is described as an "executive arcade game". Also, probably already out is the **Arkanoïd Construction Set** for the Mac.

John Elway's Quarterback should be shipping on the Nintendo, from Tradewest.

Mastertronic is hoping to be shipping **War in Middle Earth** about the time we hit the stands with this issue. Also look for a new title called **Artura**, an action adventure game similar to **Barbarian** and **Obbliterator**, from Arcadia. It will premier on the C64, Amiga, and Atari ST, with a PC version later (around April). Melbourne House is coming out with a new soccer game, first for the coin-ops, then, later, for the Amiga and the PC. Finally, I've been told that **Slam Dunk** is a code conversion of the coin-op game, **Magic Johnson's Fast Break**. I'll be looking forward to seeing it.

Taito has announced the discontinuation of the Nintendo version of **Arkanoïd**, but they are releasing the game on the Apple II and the Atari ST. Also coming are **Bubble Bauble** on Nintendo, **Operation Wolf** for C64, a new mental stimulation game called **Kix** for the C64, with versions for other systems coming in March. And there's more: **Alcon**, a planetary battle game for the PC and Atari ST, **Rastan**, a sword and sorcery arcade game for the Amiga and Atari ST (PC coming in March), **Renegade**, a street fighting game that takes place in a subway (for PC, Amiga, Apple II and IIGS, Atari ST) should be out now; also **Sky Shark** for the

Amiga, Atari ST, C64 and PC.

Acclaim announced a sequel to their very popular Nintendo cartridge, **Wizards and Warriors**. This one is called "**Iron Sword: Wizards and Warriors 2**". Also coming up are **Knight Rider** (based on the TV series), **Air Wolf**, **Othello**, and a new wireless controller for the Nintendo game machines. Acclaim is also introducing several new hand held games, including **WWF Wrestlemania**.

Masterplay is announcing the second of the three part **Star Saga** games. This one, **Star Saga: Two**, will be out in June for the PC and the Apple II.

Accolade, after a very busy fourth quarter of 1988 will only tell us that lots of games are coming in 1989. Not specific titles, yet. Sorry.

360 Pacific expects to ship **Harpoon** this month.

Other quick takes: From Titus, **Xerion** for the Macintosh, **Galactic Conqueror** (with full screen rotation of aerial maneuvering); from Bandai, Nintendo versions of **Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**, **Bandi Golf**, and (in the Spring) **Mask Rider**, **Shooting Gallery**, **Wild Boys**; from Capcom, **MegaMan 2** and eight or nine more Nintendo titles through 1989, including several new Disney games and one featuring the California Raisins.

CODES:

C64 = Commodore 64/128
A2 = Apple II
PC = IBM PC and compatibles
Am = Amiga
ST = Atari ST
GS = Apple IIGS
Mac = Macintosh
Mac2 = Macintosh II
Nin = Nintendo
Seg = Sega
Hnd = handheld

NEW PORTS

Title	Publisher	New Formats	When?
Colony	Mindscape	PC	Jan
Zork Zero	Infocom	PC, A2	?
Zany Golf	EA	Amiga	Jan
Modem Wars	EA	PC	Jan
Legacy of Ancients	EA	PC	Jan/Feb
Double Dragon	Arcadia	ST	Jan?
Pool of Radiance	SSI	PC	Jan
Heroes of the Lance	SSI	Am, C64	Jan
Dondra	Microillusions	GS, C64, PC	?
Faery Tale Adventure	Microillusions	PC, Mac2	Feb (PC)
Star Saga: One	MasterPlay	A2	Jan
Falcon	Spectrum Holobyte	C64	Jan/Feb
Tetris	Spectrum Holobyte	ST	Jan/Feb
Manhunter	Sierra	ST	Jan
Dream Zone	Bauderville	PC, Am, ST	now
Barbarian	Mastertronic	PC	Jan
John Elway's Quarterback	Mastertronic	A2	Jan

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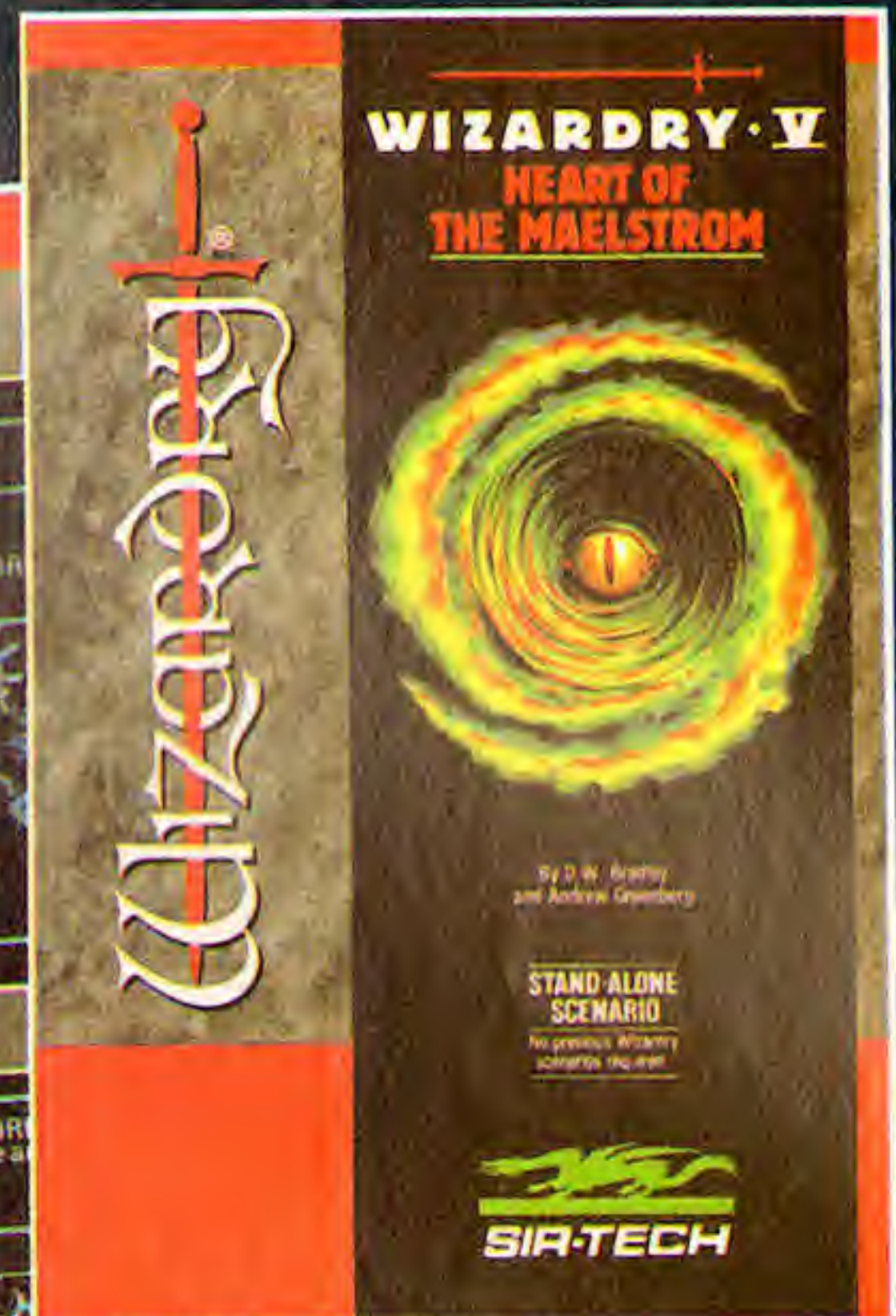
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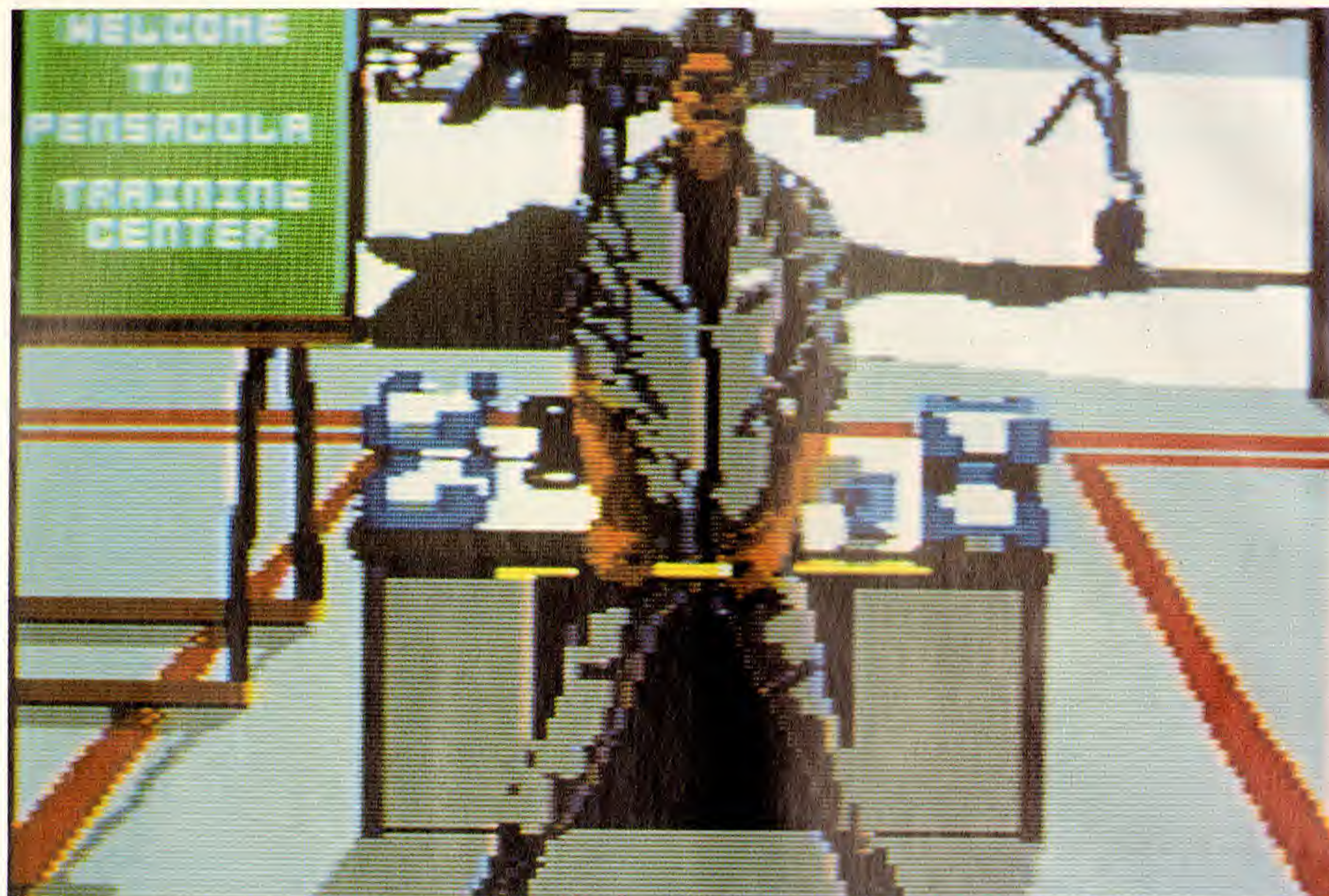
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Wizardry
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Circle Reader Service Number 19.

The Total Navy Pilot Career Simulator



By Berdj Betchakdjian

F-14 Tomcat is more than another combat jet fighter simulator, it's a total naval fighter pilot career simulator. Starting from the minute you enlist, you even sign the papers, until you either retire, or die in combat. You go through training, get assigned to a squadron, then go through a tour of duty, and go to combat in a hot spot. After a combat mission, you can get medals, if you do well, then take R and R.

FLIGHT TRAINING

Every enlistee must go through flight training before he is evaluated as a pilot. Depending on how well one performs during training, he gets assigned to a "pipeline"; this means that if you do very well, you get the jet pipeline, if not so well you get either props (propeller planes) or helos (helicopters). This information is given to you by an instructor who stands before a jet on a runway.

Training is carried out in a T-2 Buckeye trainer. You get in the cockpit of your trainer, then take off for your first training flight. Once you take off in your trainer, you start to climb and you get instruction over the radio—lines of text on the bottom of your screen. The instructions are simple: Climb to an altitude, take a particular heading, come in to land. You can land with the automatic landing control, or you can land with the joystick. If you don't use the automatic landing you should be ready to crash a couple of

Flight Training Instruction for F-14 Tomcat.

times since it's tricky to land until you get a little practice.

On your second training flight, you'll get instructions from your C.O. (commanding officer) and this time you'll fly behind your C.O. as he shows you some basic maneuvers that can save your life later. The instant replay will show you how you performed your maneuvers so you can learn from your mistakes.

There are four basic maneuvers that you are expected to learn at this point in the game. The low-G yo-yo is when you dive to increase your speed, then you pull up to lock on to your enemy. The break lets you lose airspeed by banking sharply, this lets the enemy plane overshoot you so that you wind up behind him. The spiral dive allows you to increase your speed to get away from the other plane. Then, there's the Immelmann. This allows you to change your heading by pulling up sharply, then lowering your nose into a new heading.

When you've landed after your combat maneuvers flight, you get rated by your C.O. on how well you did. You have the option at this point to go through this training again if you are not happy with your performance. This is a good idea since, if you don't do well, you'll be flying supplies into Ohio instead of flying a jet fighter.

Advanced jet training comes next, if you make it to the jet pipeline. You are reassigned to Pensacola where your C.O. prepares you for simulated dogfighting. Ground control lets you know of how many hits you've taken, or given

since live ammo could spoil your day. When a hit is scored by you, or the instructor against whom you fight, you'll land on the U.S.S. Lexington and get debriefed.

If you do well in advance training, you'll get your wings of gold, and a promotion to Lieutenant Jr. grade. You also get a nickname that will stay with you for the rest of your career. If you do well, you might be known as "Stiletto", if not, something more in the vein of "Twinkletoes". Since you can save a career to disk, you may be stuck with your nickname for a lot longer than you would want to.

There's more advanced training at Miramar Naval Air Station. There, you get final training. If you do well here, you get assigned to the U.S.S. Nimitz, but you have to complete two land-based tours of duty first.

COMBAT

Once you make it to the Nimitz war can break out any minute, and you're the first line of defense or offense. Before you go to combat, a T.V. news reporter will tell you about it. He will tell you where the war is, and what country the emergency is in like it is a typical news report. Of course, you just happen to be in the area. You then find yourself in the briefing room of the Nimitz where Admiral Hawk will brief you about the mission you are to fly. He will tell you that bogeys are coming in, from where, and that you have permission to shoot them down.

10 ►

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You take off from your carrier, and head for the enemy planes that are shown on your radar scope. Your armament consists of four systems: Phoenix, Amraam, Sidewinder, and Vulcan. The Phoenix missiles are for long range targets; these missiles are good for targets that are more than thirty-one miles away. Amraam missiles are your intermediate range missiles, and are good for targets between thirty-one to eleven miles' distance. Sidewinders are good for targets less than eleven miles' distance and function as your short range system. The Vulcan cannons are good for dogfights only, extreme close range.

Your defense consists of two systems. You have chaff rockets to divert radar tracking missiles. You also have flares to divert the heat seeking missiles. You can use evasion tactics to avoid missiles that are targeting you. You can dive with full throttle to gain speed and outrun the missile, or you can do some sharp turns to throw the missile off course. The danger with tight turn maneuvers is that if your G's are too high on the turns, you can black out and crash.

During your combat flights, you fly towards the enemy targets, and engage them first with missiles then with your cannon in dogfights. You then return to your carrier, and land on the pitching deck. If you do well, you can get medals, and that can help you later in your career. Admiral Hawk will debrief you once you're back

on the carrier. When your combat mission is ended, you can take some time off for R and R.

THE GAME ITSELF

This game is very well thought out. The graphics are great, and the controls are easy to handle. When the game is booted, the first thing you see is an excellent rendition of a carrier at sea. Above the carrier, you see F-14's doing different types of maneuvers as the credits roll on.

The cockpit is easy to understand. On the Heads Up Display (HUD), there's the altimeter on the left side, and the airspeed indicator on the right side. These are graduated vertical lines that scroll as your speed and altitude change. The compass is a horizontal line, and it links the two vertical lines making a square where you see the sky and ground. The target cursor is in the middle of this square.

The instrument panel is below the canopy. The tactical information display (TID), takes up the center of the panel. On the left is the throttle, on the right is your weapons display. The chaff, and flare indicators are on the right. A few other instruments that are necessary are also there.

THE CONTROLS

The F-14 is controlled by both joystick, and keyboard. The joystick controls turns, dives, and climbs. The rest of the functions are controlled by the keyboard. These include: rudders, weapons, defensive measures, and throttle.

The joystick control is easy. The F-14

maneuvers very well, and since it's stable, it is not critical if you let go of the stick for a second to activate one of the keyboard functions.

I, personally, enjoyed the game very much. I only had one problem with it that I feel I should share with you. When you die, you are told to put in side four of the two disk set. Once you put this side in and press the button, you see a full dress Marine funeral. For those of us who have had the misfortune to attend one of these functions, it brings up some bad memories, and it does not make us want to play it again after the first time we see this screen.

Name: F-14 TOMCAT
Type: Jet Combat Simulator
Formats: C64/128
Publisher: Activision

Ages: 12 & up
Requirements: Joystick, Disk Drive
*** Players:** One
Price: \$44.95

Ability Level:	Advanced
Packaging:	Good (8)
Documentation:	Very Good (8.2)
Graphics:	Excellent (9.1)
Playability:	Very Good (8.5)

CP RATINGS: 8.56
Circle Reader Service Number 11.

Loses Something in Translation

By Jim Fink

"If once you forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true that you may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can't fool all of the people all of the time".

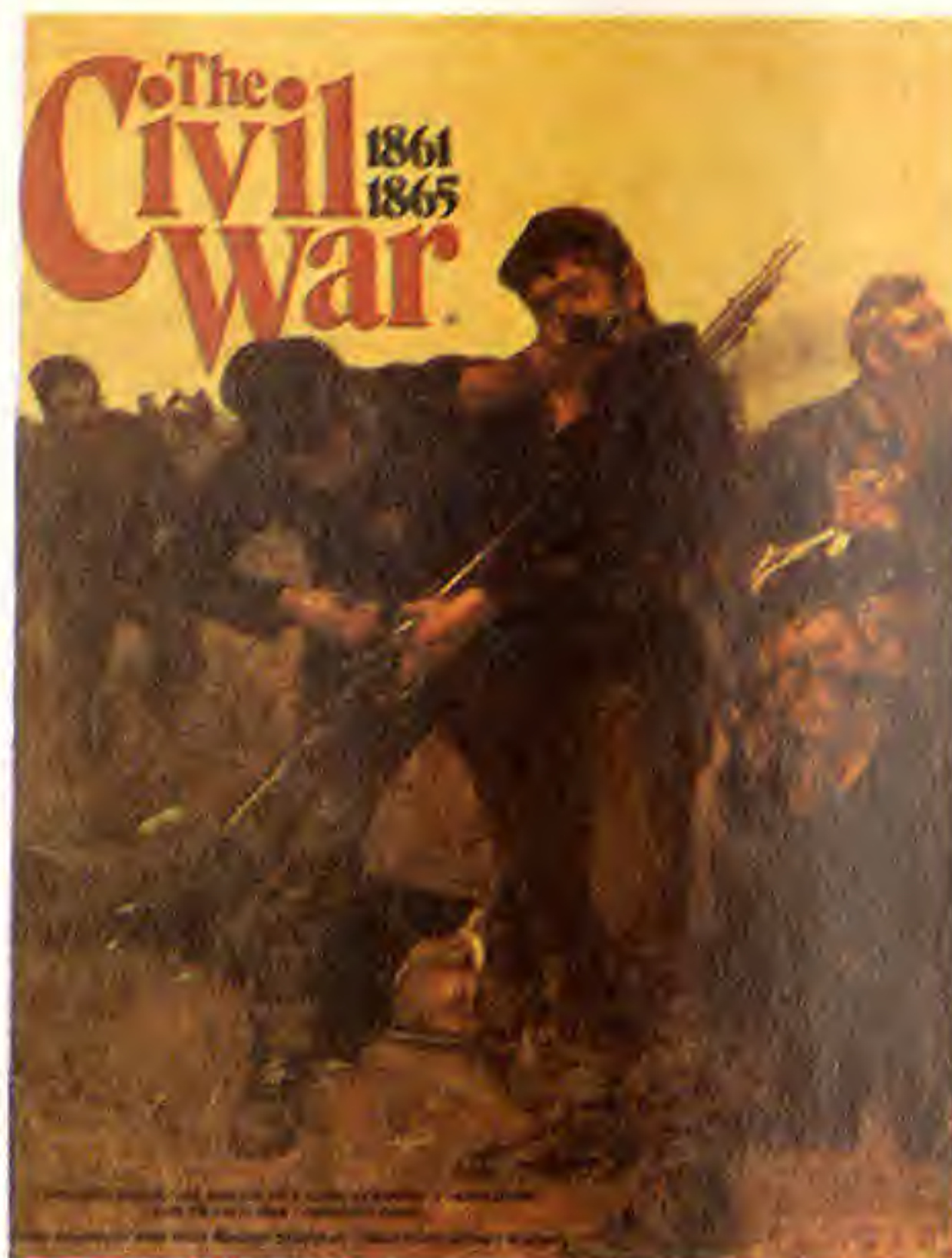
A. LINCOLN

For decades, the Avalon Hill Game company dominated the strategic board game market by producing high quality products. That formula has been abandoned in the production of "The Civil War", a computerization of the innovative board game of the same name.

There is a fundamental flaw in the notion of directly translating a board game to a computer by computerizing it, i.e. by simply attempting to reproduce the board game on the computer screen. This approach is the equivalent of trying to translate a novel from Russian to English, word-for-word. It should be intuitively obvious that certain concepts in one domain have no direct analog in the other and are not directly translatable. A translation of "War and Peace" made by looking up each word from the original in a Russian-English dictionary and replacing it with its English counterpart would be ludicrous. Likewise this game.

Beyond this failure in concept, "The Civil War" is equally deficient in execution:

- While the game requires a color graphics adapter, the graphics portion of the adapter is never used. Instead, a game map central to the play of the game is portrayed using the "block



graphics" characters (which are not graphics at all) which so distorts the map of the United States that it is unrecognizable. So poor is this representation that what you see in only an "approximation" of what is really going on. A paper map has been included (from the original board game) and it is up to you to try and make sense out of the two.

- The choice of colors and blinking characters quickly gave me a headache.

- The instructions are, for the most part, lifted directly out of the board game with minimal rewriting. Consequently, they are not very useful.

- When playing against the computer, one is only allowed to play the North.

- As an opponent, the South is not very challenging.

Considering the quality of the computer games already on the market covering the Civil War, it is not clear to me, why Avalon Hill decided to release "The Civil War". It is an embarrassing step backward in the development of computer wargame simulations.

Name: THE CIVIL WAR
Type: Simulation
Formats: IBM

Publisher: Avalon Hill Game Company
Designer: Steve Estwanik
Ages: 13 & up
Requirements: Color Graphics Adapter, (CGA, EGA or VGA)
*** Players:** One or Two
Price: \$35.00

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Average (5)
Documentation:	Fair (3)
Graphics:	Poor (2)
Realism:	Average (6)
Playability:	Fair (3)

CP RATINGS: 3.45
Circle Reader Service Number 13.

TOM CLANCY'S THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER



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Circle Reader Service Number 46.

Take Stock of Your Gaming



By Fred Blechman

Many people love to "play" the stock market—but that "playing" can be very costly. Now, if you have an IBM PC or compatible with 640K RAM, using MS-DOS 2.0 or higher, and capable of running CGA, you can play the market without facing the poor house!

Perhaps you've heard of or played "Arbitrage", a stock market and corporate manipulation board game. Arbitrage is an update of TYCOON, a Parker Brothers game. The inventor of both TYCOON and the newer Arbitrage, Henry C. Jacoby, has created TAKEOVER, a faithful computer simulation of the essential elements of Arbitrage.

Arbitrage has been called "the Monopoly of the stock market", since it deals in property (in this case options and shares of stock), buying, selling and trading to accumulate wealth—or going broke! Up to six "traders" and six corporations are available.

TAKEOVER, the computer simulation, uses two traders to move around a colorful screen display of a game board with three corporations. Electronic dice, screen messages, and a screen tally board replace the three dice, numerous drawing cards and play money of the Arbitrage game.

TAKEOVER is simple to learn, despite its many features. The "documentation" is a single page of instructions printed on two sides—that's all. I love it! I'm really sick of manuals with 50 pages or more. This review is of Version 1.01, which has some slight improvements over the original Version 1.0.

Quick and Simple

TAKEOVER is supplied on a 5-1/4" diskette unless a 3-1/2" microdiskette is specifically requested. If you buy TAKEOVER from a store, it comes with a 5-1/4" diskette, which can be exchanged for a 3-1/2" microdiskette by sending it to Jacoby with \$3 for shipping and handling.

TAKEOVER is not protected, and you can make a DISKCOPY as a working diskette. If you have a hard disk drive, a batch file is provided to install TAKEOVER in a new subdirectory on your hard disk.

Playing the Market

TAKEOVER is a Wall Street stock market trading simulation for two players. Each player starts with \$1,800. There are three corporations involved: COMPUTERS, Inc., MOTORS, Inc., and OILS, Inc.

The screen shows a multi-colored board with 24 squares around the main border. Each corporation is represented by its own color and three adjoining squares marking its Home Office. The computer moves each player around the board as a result of the random numbers that come up on animated electronic dice. Depending on which square the player "lands", instructions and comments are given.

The player might have to pay tax; go to jail for

insider trading; buy, sell or trade stocks with the bank or the other players; takeover a company by having more shares of stock than the President of that company; buy stock options; collect dividends or bonuses; or be forced to sell stock to meet a margin call. Strategy combined with the element of chance make every game different.

The object of the game is to win as much money as possible by buying, selling or trading the shares of the three corporations, whose prices fluctuate as in the real stock market. All transactions are immediately reported and updated on a Totals Board that reflects all changes in prices, share ownership, and total worth. You can end the game anytime, such as after a specified time period (or when one player is flat broke!), and the wealthiest player wins.

Playing TAKEOVER

The program starts with a credit screen then allows you to enter the names of Player 1 and Player 2. You can't play against the computer, since the computer won't make any decisions, but Player 2 can be an imaginary opponent.

The game board display (Figure 1—but you ought to see it in color!) comes up next, using the 80-column CGA text mode. The text/background color combinations are well chosen for easy readability. A monochrome version of this program is not available, probably because it would lose much of the program's eye-catching appeal and ease of reading.

Player 1 is instructed to "toss" the dice by pressing any key. Two "rolling" dice replace the Totals Board, with smiling face symbols for dots. The dice roll and click until you command them to stop and a third dice appears with either "UP" or "DOWN" on it. See Figure 2. The total of the dots determine the number of spaces the player's token (a number "1" or "2") moves counter-clockwise around the board, clicking as it moves. If a player rolls doubles, he is entitled to another turn.

The corporations offer (for simplicity) only nine shares of stock each. Computers, symbol COM, starts with \$220 shares; Motors, symbol MOT, starts with \$150 shares; Oil, symbol OIL, starts with \$90 shares.

If you land on a Home Office square, you will see the price of the shares of that corporation change, as determined by the total of the dice and the UP or DOWN marking of the third die. You will then have the right to purchase a share in that corporation at the quoted price by answering the questions. The Totals Board instantly reflects all changes.

Any player becomes President of a corporation when he or she is the first to own three shares of stock in that corporation. Presidents also collect a \$100 bonus every time they land in their own Home Office. It requires a "takeover" as explained later, to lose the Presidency.

A service charge, equal to the quoted price of the shares, will be charged to any player who lands in a corporation in which the other player is President. Obviously, one object of the game is to become President of all three corporations.

News items effecting the game will flash whenever a player lands on a square marked Wall Street Report. This can cause you to make or lose money, just as world events in real life can throw a monkey wrench into your best plans and strategy.

When you land on a Broker square, you may buy a share in any corporation for which shares are available. When you land on an Option square, you have the right to buy a stock option for any share for \$50—but you only have one chance around the board to exercise the option and get the share for only \$50. You can buy only one option per corporation per turn around the board.

As in real life, you may be faced with a margin call. This indicates that you need cash and must sell a share of your choice. Whenever dividends are declared, all players collect for each share they own in that corporation.

But be careful of Insider Trading. This is a no, no! You go to jail, lose a turn, and pay a fine.

You can sell shares to the Bank whenever it is open, as indicated by a message on your screen. If you sell a share of stock to the bank, however, you only receive 50% of the share's value. You may, if he or she agrees, sell stock to the other player for whatever price you both agree upon. A player is forced to sell shares whenever his or her cash is down to zero.

Trading between players is allowed any time the Bank is open. When trading, you may offer cash as well as stock to make the trade. You can sell shares to each other, for a price agreed upon, one at a time, as many times as you wish. You can also exchange shares without a cash payment.

When a player lands on the Takeover square, he or she can challenge and take over the Presidency of any corporation—but only if he or she already has an equal or larger number of shares of stock in that corporation than the present President.

The game ends whenever a player has zero assets, or may be ended at any time by pressing the F10 key. The winner—the player with the most assets—is trumpeted with a tune on a sign-off screen.

Summary

I found TAKEOVER easy to learn, fast and smooth in operation (even on my standard 4.77 MHz XT), and fun to play. The more I played and followed the strategy, the more absorbing it was. In less than 15 minutes you can be up to your ears in gut-wrenching decisions. Thank goodness it's not real money.

While I don't think this program will make you smart enough to get rich in the actual stock

market, it may provide enough of a vicarious thrill to keep you from going broke buying real stocks. After all, I've been told, the reason stock brokers are called "brokers" is because the more stock you buy, the broker you get!

Name: TAKEOVER
Type: Stock Market Simulation
Formats: IBM PC/AT/XT
Publisher: H.C. JACOBY, Inc.
Ages: 14 to Adult
Requirements: CGA, 64K RAM
Players: Two
Price: TAKEOVER Computer Simulation \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Good (7)
Documentation: Fair (4)
Graphics: Good (8)
Realism: Good (7)
Playability: Good (8)

CP RATINGS: 7.18

Circle Reader Service Number 14.

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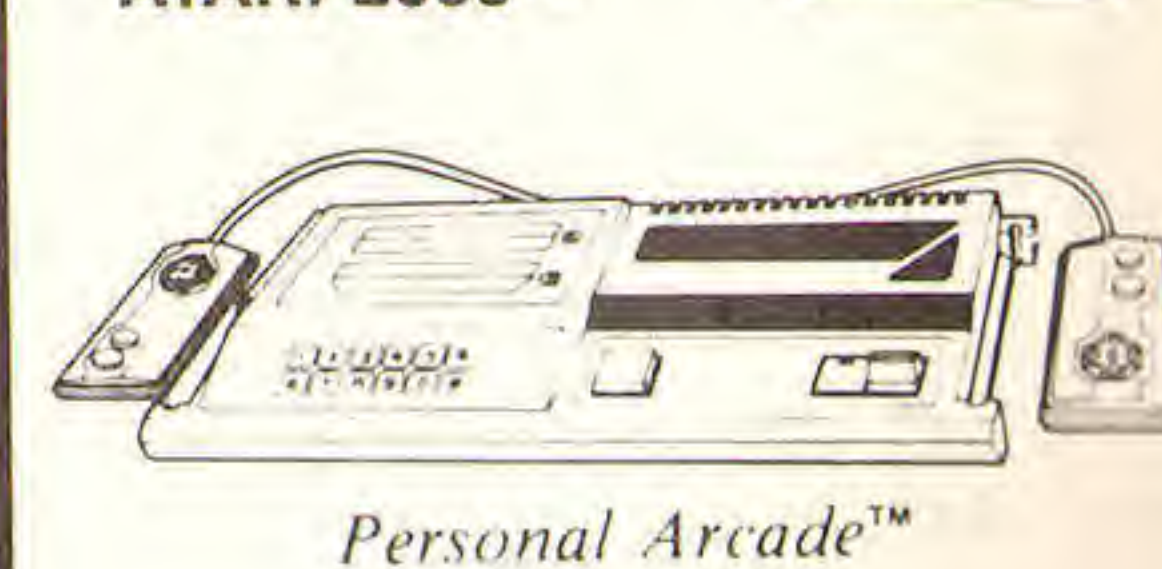
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Circle Reader Service Number 57.

Water Warriors Make Waves



Moving in on the competition is Offshore Warrior.

By Daniel Carr

Some time, way into the future, Extra-Terrestrial Pacifists have come to Earth and with their peace doctrine have managed to take control. War is gone and any kind of violent sport has been abolished. This has caused severe psychological trauma to armchair quarterbacks and couch potatoes.

So, to rectify this situation, the OFF SHORE WARRIOR movement started. The players pilot incredibly big powerboats armed with incredibly big rockets around a course in some of the world's most incredibly big lakes. Incredible, isn't it? Well, I wish I could say the same for the game.

OFF SHORE WARRIOR is a very simple arcade-style game in which the object is to race your boat against several other computer-played boats, use your rockets to destroy opponents, and watch out for rocks. You must take first or second place to continue racing in the next match. Winning four races earns a Championship for the year.

Your boat occupies the bottom center of the screen similar to the arcade game "Pole Position". On the Amiga, the graphics are excellent

with lots of color and detail showing off the boat with clouds, mountains and buildings in the background. The joystick controls the boat and you must stay between the buoys or you'll crash on the rocks. Hitting another boat head-on will also result in a crash and it's hard to catch up to the pack after a wipe-out. Staying alive and killing opponents score points which are kept at the top of the screen.

You have essentially two weapons. Rockets can help you to win but you only have a total of three less than the number of opponents, so use them wisely. The other weapon is to push an opponent's boat into the rocks. This is very hard to do and your boat can easily crash.

Waves are trouble. When you hit one, your boat will fly up into the air, lose control and can crash on the rocks or get hit from behind by a boat. Plus, you'll slow down giving your opponents time to catch up.

Several problems exist. First, the animation is jerky. I've seen many arcade-style games with very smooth and complicated animation sequences and this program seems to make short use of the Amiga's graphic capabilities. It's hard to line up a target and fire a rocket. Plus I've found it impossible to push an opponent into the

rocks. Finally, the opponents don't suffer any effects when they hit a wave. They just plow through, making it unfair!

To conclude, this was a cute little game that kept me entertained for a few hours and then got placed on my shelf to become stale-ware. There's not enough there to make it worth the money and would probably do better as part of a package containing several games.

Name: OFF SHORE WARRIOR
Type: Arcade
Formats: Amiga, IBM, Atari ST
Publisher: Titus Software
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: Joystick
Players: One
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level:	Beginner
Packaging:	Average (5)
Documentation:	Good (7)
Graphics/Text:	Good (8)
Playability:	Average (6)

CP RATINGS: 6.80
Circle Reader Service Number 16.

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GAMESTAR

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Circle Reader Service Number 65.

A Sports Simulator Par Excellence

By Rusel DeMaria

I played 36 holes today, and I didn't even work up a sweat. I even played a few holes against the great Jack Nicklaus, himself, though he beat me with his great approach shots, and, especially, with his dead-eye putts. Still I had a lot of fun, and we ended the game still friends.

That's because I was playing **Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf** on the IBM PC. This game actually contains 18 of Nicklaus' favorite PGA holes as well as two courses of his own design--Castle Pines, CO and Desert Mountain, AZ. You can play for strokes, or play the skins game, for imaginary (unfortunately) money per hole; you can even set the amount.

Before each hole, Jack offers a short piece of advice or history. For instance, he describes the 10th hole in his greatest 18 (which is also the 10th at Augusta) as the "Longest Par 4 in Major Championship Golf". Jack's comment is followed by an overhead view of the hole, complete with water hazards, bunkers, trees and the like.

After viewing the hole, you step up to the tee. The controls for choosing the club and aligning the direction of the shot (to compensate for wind or to choose a different approach) are simple arrow keys. You press the space bar once to set the swing in motion (watching a power scale on the left of the screen), then again to complete the

swing and make impact with the ball. If your third press is early or late according to the baseline on the scale, the ball will hook or slice.

Beginners will do well to try the driving range or the practice green before playing, and you can practice any hole on the course before actually playing a round. But once you have mastered the basics, each hole is a special challenge.

What's especially fun about this game is that you never play exactly the same way twice. Sometimes you'll make a 40 foot chip shot, other times you'll miss it by an ant's breath. It's even easy to hit the pin, and, with some skill and luck, to make a hole in one on a par 3 hole! The game is full of realistic touches that give you a satisfying sense of success when you do well.

Putting is a special challenge. You have to read the break (which, like the wind on longer shots is presented on a direction indicator). You also have to line up the shot accurately and put just the right amount of power into your putt. I found it easy enough to miss a 4-foot putt, but sometimes I sank a 35 foot monster (to great rejoicing).

Before you begin, you must identify one of 54 hole diagrams from a Nocopi pamphlet (Nocopi is the stuff you can't duplicate on a copier). That's the only copy protection (meaning you can easily copy the game on a hard disk). Next, choose the course to play, then choose what kind of

player to be. For instance, you can play as a male or female, drive from one of three tees (pros, men's or women's), and play expert (club is chosen for you) or beginner (computer chooses your club and tells you its normal range).

You can play alone, or in a group of 2, 3, or 4. You can also choose some computer players to round out your group, or play against friends. The computer players range from experts like the great Jack N himself, to real rank beginners who hit balls all over the course! If winning is your thrill, play one of the computer novices. You'll stand a good chance of winning, even if you do blow a lot of putts. Oh, and if you get called away in the middle of a round, you can save it to disk and continue later.

The graphics are very good, especially at EGA resolution. The colorful fairways are well drawn, and each spot on the course is faithfully reproduced, even the parts where your ball is surrounded by trees! You see the shadow of the ball on high iron shots, and also watch the ball bounce and roll at the end of a shot. And if it lands in a water hazard or bunker, you see the not-so-satisfying splash of water or sand.

And, if you're interested in knowing how an expert would play the 18 Greatest Holes, there is even a video available of Nicklas showing you the way. You can find it at local sporting goods stores and other outlets.

I guess what I like best about this game is that it is very easy to play, but rewarding when you do well. The effort is in the strategy and timing, not in remembering a lot of commands. There is enough skill and luck in the game to make it fun, but you don't have to sweat a lot of details to enjoy yourself.

Name: JACK NICKLAUS' GREATEST 18 HOLES OF MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

Type: Sports Simulation

Formats: IBM

Publisher: Accolade

Designers: Ned Martin,

Sculptured Software

Ages: 10 to Adult

Requirements: IBM,

CGA, EGA, Hercules MGA,

Tandy 16 Color; 384K required

*** Players: 1-4**

Price: \$49.95

(Commodore 64/128 version \$29.95)

Ability Level:

Beginner

Packaging:

Very Good (8.8)

Documentation:

Good (8)

Graphics/Text:

Excellent (9.2)

Playability:

Excellent (9.2)

CP RATINGS:

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Burn Drug Pushers and their Stash

By **Rusel DeMaria and George R. Fontaine**

The war against drugs is in full swing these days as the media blitz against street narcotics and other substances continues to escalate. Several games have picked up on the trend in recent times, and Broderbund's **Operation: Clean Streets** is among them.

To begin with, if you're expecting a realistic police simulation, forget it. *Clean Streets* plays a lot more like some vigilante adventure. It's an arcade-style punch'em-kick'em featuring little in the way of strategy. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to rid the city streets of all kinds of drugs, starting with ordinary caffeine (level 1) and going through cocaine (level 3), heroine (level 4) and finally, something called arcadoine (which must be arcade games?).

You play "Cleanup" Harry, a tough young cop on the move. However, it looks as if you've left your badge and gun back at the station when you donned your street clothes. In this mission, you use your fists and feet to beat up street punks and drug pushers, confiscating their stashes. It

would be somewhat more realistic if you at least waited until you observed a drug deal taking place, or until one of the pushers actually solicited you. But in this game, you basically beat up everyone you meet. I'm afraid Harry would spend more time in front of Internal Affairs than out on the streets.

The game would also be more interesting if you could explore some of the buildings, using your undercover skills to find the pushers.

As it is, it takes little effort to meet an unpleasant assortment of enemies, including a chainsaw-wielding thug, a whip cracking lady, and a few martial arts types armed with shirokins, numchuks, and swords. To make things worse, people frequently chuck garbage out their windows at you. You aren't working in the classy part of town!

It may sound tough, but it isn't really hard at first. But as you play the higher levels, you meet more enemies, and they are more aggressive. In time, you'll need to make it to the burning garbage can where you dispose of the drug haul (so much for the evidence room). However, when you burn the confiscated drugs, you regain some

of your energy (which is lost whenever you are hit by an enemy or pelted by flying garbage).

The graphics in this game are OK; in fact, they are quite good for CGA. Unfortunately, the game doesn't support EGA modes, so I still feel that the graphics could be better. Also, playing the game with a joystick is generally smooth, but not always. You have to get used to turning Harry around; I often found him kicking backward when I wanted him to turn.

The fighting sequences are fairly well animated, but the only real challenge comes when you have to fight more than one enemy at a time. One on one, you can quickly master any of the opponents in the game with a few simple tricks. But as the levels increase, the opponents become more numerous, more aggressive, and more subtle. You also have to confiscate greater amounts of stash to complete the level, making it even harder.

All in all, *Operation: Clean Streets* is an enjoyable game, but we were somewhat disappointed that it didn't take the undercover cop story a little further, and that it didn't feature a more realistic treatment of the subject. As an arcade game, it is interesting and sometimes fun. There are several little tricks in the game that you can discover that add to its appeal. In the final analysis, however, it is like many other games—well programmed, fast paced, and fun, but not earthshaking.



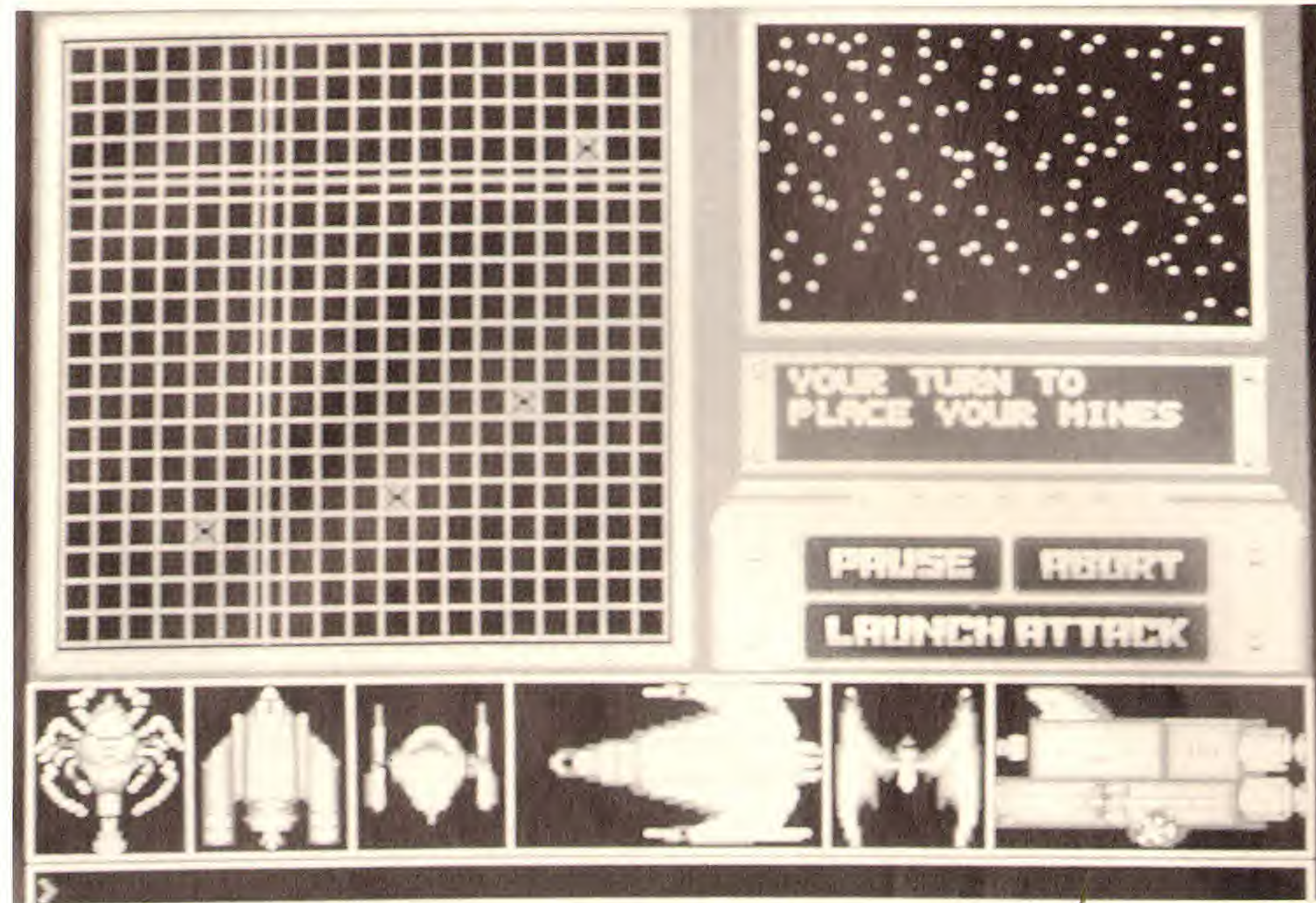
Fighting a pusher off the streets in *Operation Clean Streets*.

Name: OPERATION CLEAN STREETS
Type: Arcade Action
Formats: IBM PC
Publisher: Broderbund Software
Designers: Silmaris
Ages: Teens
Requirements: at least 1 floppy disk;
 DOS 2.1 or higher; 512K;
 Joystick optional.
Players: One
Price: \$34.95

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Very Good (8.2)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Good (8)
Playability: Average (7.5)

CP RATINGS: 7.77
 Circle Reader Service Number 18.

Laser Bolt Drone Destroyers



Sector Grid from *Kosmic Krieg*.

By **John S. Manor**

Battleship is one of those classic boardgames that everyone has played at one time or another. *Kosmic Krieg*, from Alpha Tech Computers, is a battleship game set in deep space that adds a few new twists to this time-honored game and brings it right into today's (and maybe tomorrow's) computerized world.

In *Kosmic Krieg*, you and your opponent each have an armada of drone ships that you control from your mother ship. You are competing for the right to colonize the few planets in the galaxy that will support humanoid life. You meet head to head and take turns launching laser bolts at each other's drones. Up to this point *Kosmic Krieg* is a graphically pleasing and fun-to-play version of Battleship.

"Then what's so special about this game?" you may ask. "There are other battleship games for my computer". Well, *Kosmic Krieg* is special, and I'll explain why. *Kosmic Krieg* allows you to play by modem against a friend or against bbs (bulletin board system) computer, as well as playing it against your computer or against a human opponent on your computer. That makes

it a rather flexible and useful piece of software and not "just another battleship game".

I first played *Kosmic Krieg* in one player mode against the computer. The computer plays a tough game and you have to use your best strategy to beat it. I've played many times, and I'm still barely winning half of them.

There are four main variations to *Kosmic Krieg*. You can play Barrage, Five Shot, Barrage with asteroids or Five Shot with asteroids. Barrage gives you one shot for each drone-piece you have on the playing grid, for a maximum of twenty-six shots. As your opponent (computer or human, in the same room or across the country) scores hits on your drones, you lose shots for your next turn. Conversely, the more hits you have against his drones, the better for your armada the next time he bombards it. The Five Shot game gives both players five shots for each turn, no matter how many pieces you have left. I think this probably makes for a more even game as well as a slower game. Finally, you can tell the game to put asteroids randomly on the grid in either style of game. This will confuse and confound players by making them think they've scored a hit when they are just pounding rocks.

Kosmic Krieg is easy to use and learn, with simple menu selections that you click on with the mouse. The main menu displays three options: Communications, Start Game and Statistics. When you select Start Game the playing screen appears.

The graphics of the playing screen in *Kosmic Krieg* are sharp and well organized. On the left side of the screen is the playing grid. On the right side is a view of deep space. The bottom of the screen shows pictures of each of the drones that make up your space armada. On the middle right are buttons to pause or abort the game and a button to launch your attacks. Above this is a computer display window where you will see important messages during the game.

Here's a hint: The pictures of the drone fleets will show hits on them by fragmenting and burning. This is a nice graphic touch that can help you figure out where to launch your next attack. Each drone has a distinct shape and a certain number of pieces. If you know which drone you just hit, then you may know where the rest of its pieces are.

Before you start to play, you type in your name. The game keeps track of your wins and losses, your winning percentage and your skill rating. You can check your overall record by clicking on Statistics at the first menu. You can also print out statistics for any player.

You start play by placing mines around your enemy's grid. You get five mines. Mines and shots are placed on the grid by moving a set of crosshairs with the mouse. This is a convenient method that has a nice feel to it.

Your mines explode and you then place all your shots strategically on the grid. When you are done, you click on the box labeled "launch attack". Laser beams reach out into space towards your opponent's armada. If you hit a drone, that square on the grid turns orange. If you miss, the square turns white. When your attack is completed, it's your opponent's turn.

I have always loved using a modem with my computer. It's a great way to meet other computerists with the same interests. To play Kosmic Krieg by modem, you and a friend connect through the simple Comm-Link communications program included in the game. The Comm-Link program is set up for Hayes-compatible modems running at 300, 1300 or 2400 baud. Other modems can also be used.

Once connected, both players have to agree on the same game options or it won't work. For example, you both have to choose Five Shot without asteroids. Both players also have to be at the same baud rate.

Now the fun really begins. Both players place their drones and mines. You take turns designing and launching attacks until only one of you stands victorious amidst the smoke and cosmic debris.

Here's another hint: There's an input line in Kosmic Krieg that lets you and your opponent send messages back and forth while you play. You can hurl invectives at your opponent, insult him, tell him he couldn't hit the broad side of a

black hole and so on. If you happen to be losing (and even if you aren't), you can send messages while he is setting up to attack. The messages will pop up on his playing grid, making it impossible for him to place shots. This way you can harass him into making mistakes (hopefully fatal).

You can also play Kosmic Krieg on a bbs where the sysop has a Kosmic Krieg shell installed. Alpha Tech has made the shell available as shareware. This means if you use it and like it, you send in a donation (\$15.00 is suggested). Sending the donations entitles you to upgrades on Kosmic Krieg. (You must own the game to play it on a bbs). The shell works with bbs programs that can run outside programs. The manual lists BBS Express!, F.o.R.e.M. ST, and StarNET as examples of bbs programs that will run the Kosmic Krieg shell.

I played Kosmic Krieg both on Alphatech's bbs and on a bbs in my area. On a bbs you would see a menu that offers Instructions, View today's players or Play Kosmic Krieg. You enter your name and a password. Your won-loss record is displayed (if you've played the bbs before). You choose Two player-modem from a game menu and select the variation of game you wish to play (Barrage, etc.). Your armada is launched and you play the game line on your own computer. The bbs is tough to beat. It also heckles you during the game.

When you finish the game, your record is updated. If you have one of the ten best records on the bbs, your name will be displayed on the opening screen along with your record.

You may be thinking that it's a drawback for both players to have to own the game to play online. Well, if a sysop adds Kosmic Krieg to his bbs, there will be lots of new opponents to challenge you. Call up your local bbs and ask the sysop to get the Kosmic Krieg shell. Before you know it, maybe there'll be a message base just for Kosmic Krieg-ers challenging each other to see who's top gun, swaggering online and bragg-

ing of their playing ability. Maybe Kosmic Krieg will be the start of a whole new category of commercial software for bulletin boards. I hope so, it would add an exotic bit of variety to the entertainment side of home computing.

There are so many ways to play Kosmic Krieg that I think it has something to please just about any computer enthusiast. Solo players will find that they keep going back "for one more game". Modem addicts will love the idea of fighting online. Sysops will have a new toy to play with (and one with no bugs to work out).

Kosmic Krieg is a simple game with a unique approach that has the potential to change the way you view and use your computer for some time to come. No longer will you have to be a lone computer gamer, or have to watch the clock while you're playing an online game. Pick up Kosmic Krieg if you dare, and I'll see you out there on a bbs in deep space.

Name: KOSMIC KRIEG
Type: Arcade/Strategy
Formats: Atari ST. Versions for IBM, Apple and Amiga coming soon.
Publisher: Alpha Tech Computers
Designers: Tom Zemlin, Roger Hamilton and Roger Hardy
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: Color Monitor, Modem for modem-play
*** Players:** One or Two or by modem or bbs
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Good (7.5)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics/Text: Good (7.5)
Realism: Good (7.5)
Playability: Very Good (8.5)

CP RATINGS: 8.06
 Circle Reader Service Number 25.

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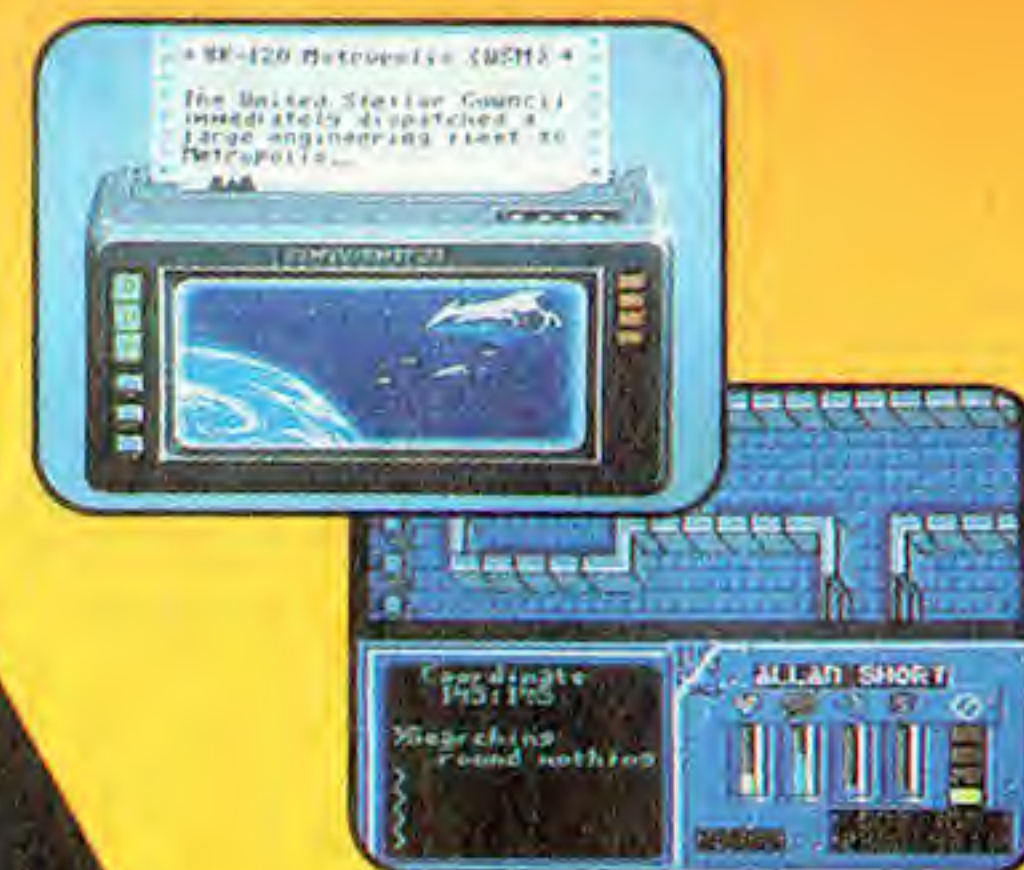
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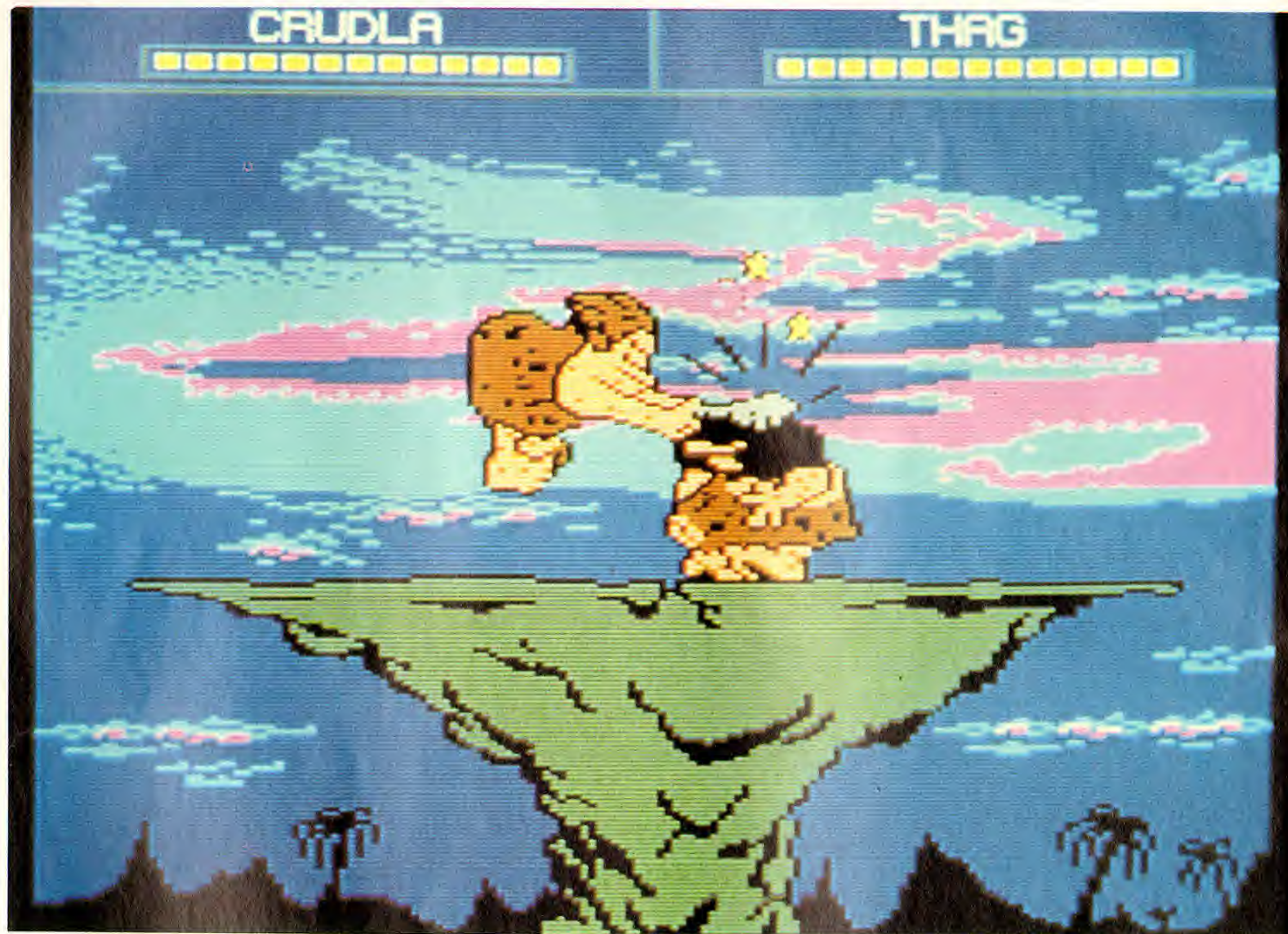


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Caving In to Primitive Urges



By Berdj Betchakdjian

When I was asked to review *Caveman Ugh-Lympics*, I was a little skeptical about it. I thought it was going to be a boring arcade-type game with endless screens, and unattainable goals. On the drive home, though, I looked at the back of the box the game came in and I started to laugh right in the middle of rush hour, not an easy chore.

Well, I was right about one thing only, it is an arcade type game, but it is enjoyable, and the player can finish every 'event' without too much trouble. The trouble is that you have to get better to get those scores up and win.

The designers of this game kept one thing in mind; fun. This game is enjoyable from the minute you look at the back of the box, to

reading the little newspaper that's included in the package called Ugh-Zaminer.

So, let's look at the game itself, now. There are six events in the Ugh-Lympics: the mate toss, dino race, fire making, clubbing, saber race, and the dino vault. You can choose, from the options screen, to practice or to start the games. If you choose to practice, you go to another screen to pick the event you want to practice. If, however, you choose to start the games, then you play all the events one after the other—it doesn't take long to finish the game, so don't think it will take hours.

Now, let's look at the events. In the mate toss, you grab your mate by the foot then you start to spin. You go faster, and faster by turning the joystick counter clockwise, then you let go and watch your mate fly across the screen to one of

the distance markers. Don't accelerate too fast though, because you can get out of control and start wobbling. And don't spin too long, if you do, you'll get tired, turn red, and your distance won't be that good. Once your mate lands, you'll know if you did well or not by the body gestures of your mate.

The dino race is you against another player, or against the computer. You start the race spurring your dino a little, then you can turbo-tap him to get him to jump over rocks, or just to get him to go a little faster. If you club your dino too much, he'll belly flop, and it takes time to get him up and running, don't club him enough, and he gets lazy.

When fire making, you have to rub two stick together faster and faster until embers start falling into your kindling. Once you have some

embers, you can start blowing until smoke starts to appear from the tinder. Watch out for the other player though, he just might decide to use his stick to bop you on the head instead. So if you see the Ugh-lympian stop, duck before he swings that stick.

Clubbing is the next event. You fight another Ugh-lympian on a raised platform of stone. You first go through the intimidation phase where both players swing their clubs wildly to frighten the other guy. You try to divert the other guy's attention by pointing to the sky, when he looks, bonk that fool. You can also duck and knock him in the knees; do it three times and he may run backwards off the platform. The player remaining on the platform wins.

The saber race can be a little frightening, especially if the other player doesn't like you. If you trip the other guy while you're both running from the saber tooth tiger, it'll keep the tiger busy enough for you to take a rest, and give the poor creature a little snack. But look out, it doesn't take long for that cat to finish a snack and start looking for a main dish. You have to keep running just ahead of the tiger, looking for a tree to climb on, and safely stay in until the next event.

The dino vault will test your ability well. First,

you can set the height of the dino before you begin your jump. If you want to make a higher jump, the cave guy on the dino's head will tempt him with a huge steak at the end of a pole. If you want a lower jump, the same guy will jump up and down on the dino's head to lower him a couple of feet. The next step is making your run at the dino. Start your run, then keep pulling the joystick back and forth to the rhythm of your running feet. When you get to the dino, plant your pole and sail over him. But look out, if you land in the dino's mouth, you're in for a hard time; first because the dino will take a taste of you, then he'll spit you out because he thinks your clothes taste better than you do.

Once you're done playing the game, you should take a look at the Ugh-zaminer. A lot of time has been put in this modest publication and it is funny. There are some articles in it written like it was a prehistoric paper, and there are some mock advertisements in it also in the same style. One of the articles has the headline 'Threat of Terrorist Gorillas at this Year's Games' is an example of the bent of this game. The personal section has some interesting people looking for, ugh, mates. The Ugh-zaminer is well worth reading because it sets the mood for the whole game.

The game itself is excellent. The graphics are great, the events are funny, and the whole concept is well thought out. Overall, games like this are few and far in between, and I hope I'll see some more games with a funny twist to them since enjoyment is what gaming is about, not accumulating points. If I had to describe this unique game in one word, it would have to be Ugh-ly.

Name: CAVEMAN UGH-LYMPICS
Type: Arcade
Formats: C64/128
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Designer: Greg Johnson
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: Joystick, Disk Drive
*** Players:** One to Six
Price: \$29.95

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Good (8)
Documentation:	Very Good (8.5)
Graphics:	Very Good (9)
Realism:	Very Good (9)
Playability:	Excellent (9.5)

CP RATINGS: 9.08
Circle Reader Service Number 27.

Five Perfect Solids to 1988

By John S. Manor

Space Cutter is a new arcade game from Rainbird that takes you out into space and through thousands of interconnected universes. You fly an advanced needle-nosed spacecraft. Your goal is to open a timegate back to Earth in the golden age of 1988 and escape the mechanical beings who have enslaved humanity. You do this by exploring the thousands of universes or 'eigenspaces' to find the five 'perfect solids'; three-dimensional rotating shapes. Giant spinning wheels called space gates are your means for getting from one universe to the next. Drag the



Searching the universe for perfect solids in *Space Cutter*.

perfect solids through them and you will escape back to Earth.

Your mission isn't an easy one. The enemy will try to stop you with a variety of ships. Fortunately you have missiles and chaff pods with which to fight back. Your missiles will home in on a nearby enemy. But be careful! If there is no enemy, your missile will circle around and go up your own tail pipe! (It is best to have the enemy ship right in front of you when you fire.) You also get four chaff pods that will seek out and destroy the nearest enemy ship. You start with twelve ship 'hulls' to complete your mission.

You control your ship with the mouse. You have limited fuel and ammo. There are depots for fuel, ammo and chaff pods scattered throughout the universes. Fly close to one of these and you are resupplied.

I found playing *Space Cutter* to be addicting fun. However, it is very difficult to control the ship accurately. It is extremely sensitive to movements of the mouse. Many times I made my ship go one way when I ment it to go another. Flying through a stargate is like threading a needle, when your hand keeps shaking. Practice and patience wins the day though.

The graphics in *Space Cutter* are stunning. The depots are three dimensional shaded objects that twirl through space, as is your ship. I paused

the game several times just to admire the realism.

Space Cutter comes on a single-sided disk with an instruction booklet. The booklet gives you routes to some of the more difficult perfect solids (after all there are 4 billion universes on eleven levels).

Space Cutter is a challenging arcade game that you will find yourself going back to play long after other games have paled and lost your interest.

Name: SPACE CUTTER
Type: Arcade
Publisher: Rainbird
Designer: Maelstrom Games
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: Color Monitor
*** Players:** One
Price: \$29.95

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Good (7.5)
Documentation:	Very Good (8.5)
Graphics:	Very Good (9)
Realism:	Very Good (8.5)
Playability:	Very Good (8.5)

CP RATINGS: 8.45
Circle Reader Service Number 28.

The Underground Rat Race

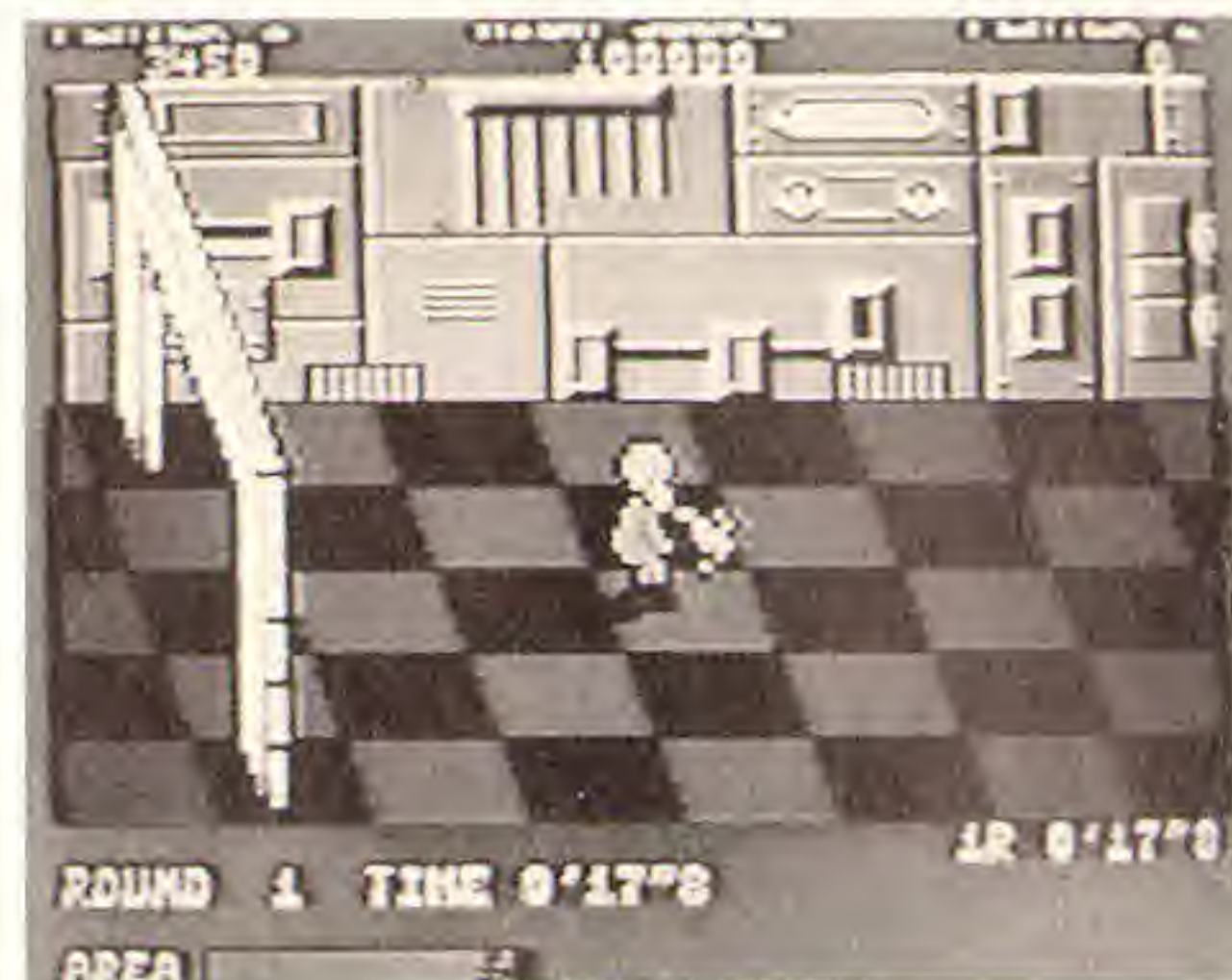
By John S. Manor

In *Metrocross*, from Epyx, you control a helmeted character as he runs through an underground tunnel filled with obstacles such as rolling barrels, cubes and tires, hurdles, green slime tiles and potholes. The object of this footrace is to reach the end of each tunnel before time runs out.

The obstacle courses you encounter are designed to stop you or slow you down at every turn. It takes practice and strategy to get through the tunnel, a section at a time. But I had fun doing it. Each part of the tunnel seems to have a trick to it that you will have to learn.

You control your character with the joystick. There are skateboards scattered along the way that will let you move faster. You can glide right over the green tiles that normally slow you down. Stepping on tin cans stops the clock for a bit and kicking them increases your speed. There are also springboards that you can use to propel yourself forward in an airborne tumblersault, avoiding everything on the ground and saving precious seconds.

I found the best strategy is to keep a steady pace and to avoid tripping over as many obstacles as possible. As you run through the tunnel you must also watch out for rats. They



Underground tunnel from *Metrocross*.

will try to hold on to you and slow you down. The only way to get rid of them is to run into a barricade or grating. When you reach the finish line (finally), a flourish of music sounds and your character takes a rest, his breath puffing out. Then you move on to the the next section of the tunnel.

There seem to be an unlimited number of tunnels, each holding more surprises and challenges. They are all done with smooth scrolling, attractive graphics and fun animation and sound. I particularly like the sound when you get squished by barrels and blasted into the air by the gratings.

Metrocross comes on a single-sided disk with an instruction book for the Atari ST and Commodore. The section on obstacles and time savers will give you some hints on playing the game.

Metrocross is a cool arcade game with an original theme. Sports games like this are a welcome break from shooting aliens and slaying dragons. *Metrocross* is a challenging game with enough variety to keep even the most avid arcade gamer happy for some time.

Name: METROCROSS
Type: Arcade
Formats: Atari ST, C64/128
Publisher: Epyx
Ages: 6 & up
Requirements: Color Monitor, joystick
Players: Two
Price: \$24.95

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Good (8)
Documentation: Good (8)
Graphics: Very Good (9)
Playability: Good (8)

CP RATINGS: 8.25
Circle Reader Service Number 29.

The Grass is Greener

By John S. Manor

Okay, so once again the aliens are invading the Earth. "So what?" you may ask. Well, for one thing, they're spraying a polluting virus around that makes all the green trees and grass turn an ugly shriveled brown. In *Virus*, from Rainbird, you are the pilot of a hoverplane armed with laser cannon and missiles. Your mission is to stamp out those nasty virus-spreading aliens.

You start out at your base; a plain grey platform. Your hoverplane is a wide, swept-wing craft of a bright green color. You control the hoverplane with either a mouse or the keyboard. You raise and lower the nose of the hoverplane and apply thrust to move.

As you fly along, the three-dimensional countryside rolls below. You pass over lakes and rivers, where you see fish swimming. You hear the aliens before you actually see them. A high whining sound means an alien Seeder is nearby, busily spreading the virus. Get close enough and launch a homing missile, but keep an eye (and ear) out for alien fighters.

The display has a long range scanner that shows uninfected areas as green and infected areas as brown. The alien ships show up as colored dots. The number of planes and missiles



Seeder ship spreading germs in *Virus*.

you have left, your height, and fuel level are also displayed at the top of the screen.

Virus is played in waves, each wave harder than the one before it with more aliens. Your final score is rated from pitiful to acceptable. Scores are not saved to disk, which I thought was a drawback.

Virus would be pretty easy to play, were it not for the way the hoverplane handles. I found it almost impossible to control with the mouse. Using the keyboard gave better control, but it was still difficult to fly and shoot aliens at the same time.

The graphics in *Virus* are excellent. The terrain is a patchwork quilt of bright colors that gives the

game a unique, cartoon-like appearance. Realistic trees and buildings dot the landscape and the animation is pleasing to watch (including the fishes).

Virus is a good quality arcade game. However, it is also frustratingly hard to play at times. Be assured that you won't be disappointed with *Virus*, but don't expect to rout the aliens and rack up high scores until after a lot of hours of flying practice.

Name: VIRUS
Type: Arcade
Publisher: Rainbird
Designer: David Braben
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: Color Monitor
Players: One
Price: \$29.95

Ability Level: Beginner
Packaging: Good (7.5)
Documentation: Good (7.5)
Graphics: Excellent (9.5)
Realism: Excellent (9.5)
Playability: Good (7)

CP RATINGS: 7.75
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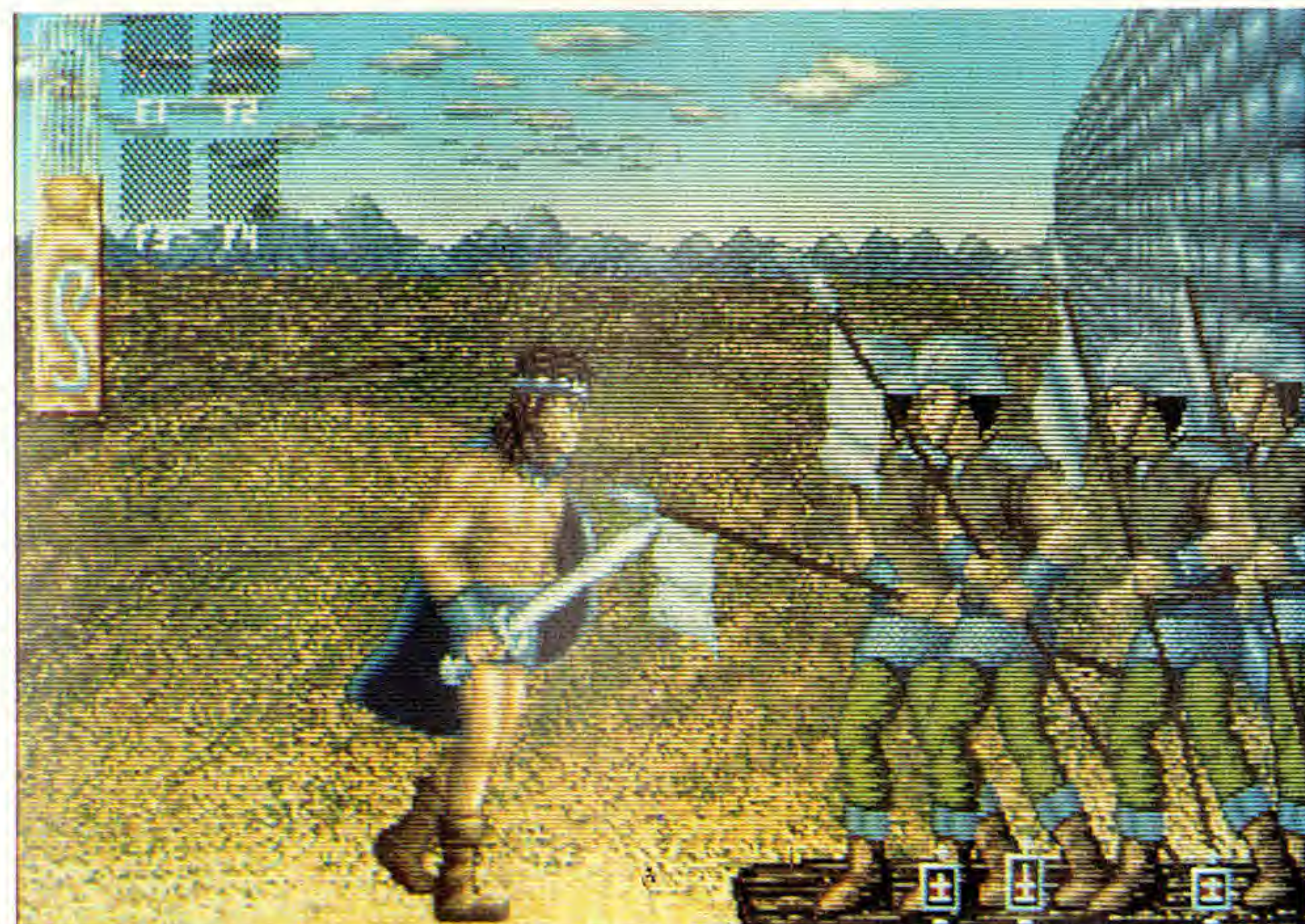
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Sword Out Your Problems



Some of the meanies from Sword of Sodan.

By Daniel Carr

SWORD OF SODAN is one of those drop-your-jaw knock-out arcade-style games with first-rate graphics and sound. There are eleven levels or screens with each one having something different to fight or get past.

For the plot, it appears this necromancer, Zoras, has killed your father the King, and is off terrorizing the countryside along with submerging the Kingdom into darkness. So, to correct this problem, you resort to the old standby: revenge.

Zoras, however, is holed up in castle Cragmoore and getting in there to him won't be easy. Guards in the city and monsters in the forest and graveyard must be dispatched first.

Once in the castle, all sorts of nasties are lurking about in every hallway and passage just waiting to turn you into hero-chow.

The game is started by choosing either a muscular hero or overly endowed heroine. Control is by joystick with up for jumping, down for kneeling and right for forward. Pushing up and left will make your hero perform a broad jump. To swing the sword, the fire button and stick are pushed simultaneously with up for hacking overhead, left to swing forward and down to hit low. All of these maneuvers must be mastered to get to Zoras.

Your sword and magic items are all the tools you have to defeat Zoras. When you meet an

55 ►

A New Command System for Wargames



Battles in Normandy.

By Jim Fink

In the past two years, a quiet revolution has been realized in the development of computer strategy games. Strategic Studies Group has introduced, developed, and brought to maturity the first true wargame system available for commercial use. The objective of this system is to depict 20th Century corps level combat (i.e. 60 or less battalions per side) within a 25 day period over an area of about 1000 square kilometers. They have succeeded brilliantly!

Each of 28 scenarios encompassed in the four titles in this system present a variety of corps level actions (most from World War II but also from World War I, Korea, Vietnam, and even the Mexican War of 1848) that have one and only one underlying set of rules and user interface. This means that as a player, you have to learn only one set of rules and menus to be able to play any of the scenarios in the system.

THE RULES

The rules themselves are simple, clever, and absorbing. They represent a limited set of the principal activities a corps commander can take, and provide a distinct separation in control from your corps command, and that of your subordinate regimental and battalion commands. The approach is decidedly different from a typical board game where the player has control over each and every unit on the board. When using the **Battlefront System**, you act as corps commander. The only units over whom you have direct control are the various divisional headquarters units under your command.

Combat units (regiments and their constituent battalions) act under your general supervision, but cannot be directly ordered by you. A regular military hierarchy is maintained by the system. You give orders to maneuver or fight to

regiments, and these orders are passed on to their respective battalions who actually move or fight. Combat units have several attributes which effect their performance: experience, fatigue, supply, and combat state:

1. Experience

Combat units have four levels of experience (Elite, Veteran, Trained and Green) these levels are a constant throughout the game.

2. Fatigue

A combat unit may be Fresh, Fit, Tired or Exhausted. As a unit is committed to combat more and more frequently, its fatigue will increase. Moreover, a unit committed to any action at night will suffer increased levels of fatigue. On the other hand, allowing a unit to sleep at night by giving it no orders, or pulling it out of combat, will result in a decrease in fatigue.

3. Supply

Regiments have four supply states - Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. These states will be one of the determinates of success or failure in their attacks and defense. As units are used in combat, their supply state declines, and they must be replenished by their division. Divisions have the same four supply states, but division supply represents the ability of division to resupply its subordinate regiments.

4. Combat State

Each regiment may be in one of 3 possible combat states: Engaged, Contact, or Ready:

a. Engaged - when in this state, a regiment is fully committed to combat. You can order it to attack or defend, but not to maneuver.

b. Contact - when in this state, a regiment is close to the enemy, and can order limited attacks and defense, but again, cannot freely maneuver.

c. Ready - This is the only state that allows you to maneuver a regiment. It is out of

contact with the enemy and may be ordered toward an objective. As it carries out those orders, if it closes with the enemy, it will change its condition to Engaged or Contact, depending upon how close it comes to the enemy.

d. Reserve - Once a unit is committed to combat, i.e. it is in Contact or Engaged with the enemy, the only way you can regain maneuver control over the unit is if you order it into reserve. This will move the unit toward its divisional headquarters, but beware, if attacked while under reserve orders, casualties can be catastrophic!

These four elements - experience, fatigue, supply, and combat state, are the principal determinant of combat results, and you can always examine your own troops to evaluate their status. Your ability to analyze the strength of enemy units is limited to his position, and type (e.g. armor or infantry) but you cannot determine his strength, supply state, training or fatigue.

The interaction of these rules produces a great deal of realism. Whereas most boardgames are deterministic in structure, (i.e. for each possible move or combat there exists a known set of outcomes that are mathematically predictable and some of which are optimum) in the Battlefront system you do not have enough information to determine what the optimum move is. Consequently, you will not spend your time counting up factors trying to get that 3 to 1 attack. Instead you will be trying to keep your supply lines open, seeing that units get sufficient rest, that depleted units are rotated out of the line, and above all maintaining an adequate reserve. These duties are, of course, the most important ones of a corps commander.

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Giving orders to a unit is managed using a simple set of menus. The orders from which you can select are limited to the legitimate ones for that unit considering its combat state.

THE SCENARIOS

The following are the scenarios that are supplied in each of the 4 games that make up the Battlefront system:

Battlefront	Battles in Normandy
Crete	Onaha
Stalingrad	Utah
Saipan	Sword
Bastogne	Cherbourg
	Carentan
	Villers-Bocage
Rommel	Goodwood
Syria	Epsom
Sidi Rezegh	
Malta	Halls of Montezuma
The Cauldron	Mexico City
Alem el Halfa	Belleau Wood
Kasserine	Iwo Jima
Maknassy	Okinawa I
Tebourga Gap	Okinawa II
	Inchon
	Hue

You can play either side in each of the scenarios.

MODIFYING THE SCENARIOS

In each of the 28 scenarios provided in the games of the Battlefront system, you can modify any of the underlying assumptions of the scenario using the Strategic Studies Group's Warplan. Warplan allows you to change the strength, the supply state, the fatigue state, the weapons, and/or the training state of a battalion or battalions prior to the beginning of a game. It also permits you to add or delete battalions from

regiments, and change their time and/or place of arrival. Finally, you may modify the map on which the game is played, adding, changing or deleting terrain. In short, with this tool it is simple to modify any scenario to make it more balanced, or "historical".

In fact, you can create entirely new scenarios using the tools in Warplan. Doing so is a lot of work, but is precisely with these tools that the SSG prepares a new title for this series!

Similarly, you have the ability to modify the icons that represent units and terrain on the screen with a utility called Warpaint. If you are creative, you can change the look as well as the feel of the game on the screen.

It should be added that both Warplan and Warpaint are also furnished with Strategic Studies Group's other game system Decisive Battles of the Civil War. Once you have learned how to use these utilities, the knowledge is transferable to other products.

COMPATIBILITY

The four titles that so far comprise the Battlefront series were released over a two and one half year period. During that time, changes were made in the system, some of which had a decided effect on the look, feel, and/or play of the games. The extraordinary programming and systems ability of the SSG team is demonstrated in the upgrades, as they are each upwardly and downwardly compatible. By this, I mean, you can play any of the early scenarios with any of the later releases of the program, and the new changes will be incorporated, or conversely, you can play any of the late scenarios with the early programs and changes will be left out. This is not easy to do, but clearly enhances the value of the system.



Battlefront.

SUMMARY

The Battlefront System is one of the most innovative strategic game systems ever developed, but you may find that like olives, you have to acquire the taste. If you are interested in military gaming, it is certainly worth owning one or more of these titles to see how you like the game. You should be prepared, however, for a substantially different experience than most computer or board games. With Battlefront, you manage battles as opposed to fighting them. It is your subordinates who actually do the fighting, and their success or failure depends on the skill with which you manage the resources that they need to win. You may find yourself very frustrated at the lack of direct control over events on your computer screen.

I would suggest that if you are going to buy one of these games to give the system a trial, you would do well to purchase either Rommel or Halls of Montezuma, as these contain the latest versions of the program, including the much more handsome Warpaint terrain and unit icons. Then, if you like what you see and want to get earlier titles, you will be able to upgrade them.



Battles in Normandy.

Name: BATTLEFRONT SYSTEM
-Battlefront

-Battles in Normandy

-Halls of Montezuma

-Rommel

Type: Strategy/Simulation

Formats: Commodore 64/128

Publisher: Strategic Studies Group (SSG)

Designer: Roger Keating,
Ian Trout, et al

Ages: 10 & up

* Players: One or Two

Price: \$40.00

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Good (7)
Documentation:	Good (7)
Graphics:	Average (5)
Realism:	Excellent (9.8)
Playability:	Excellent (9.8)

CP RATINGS: 8.50

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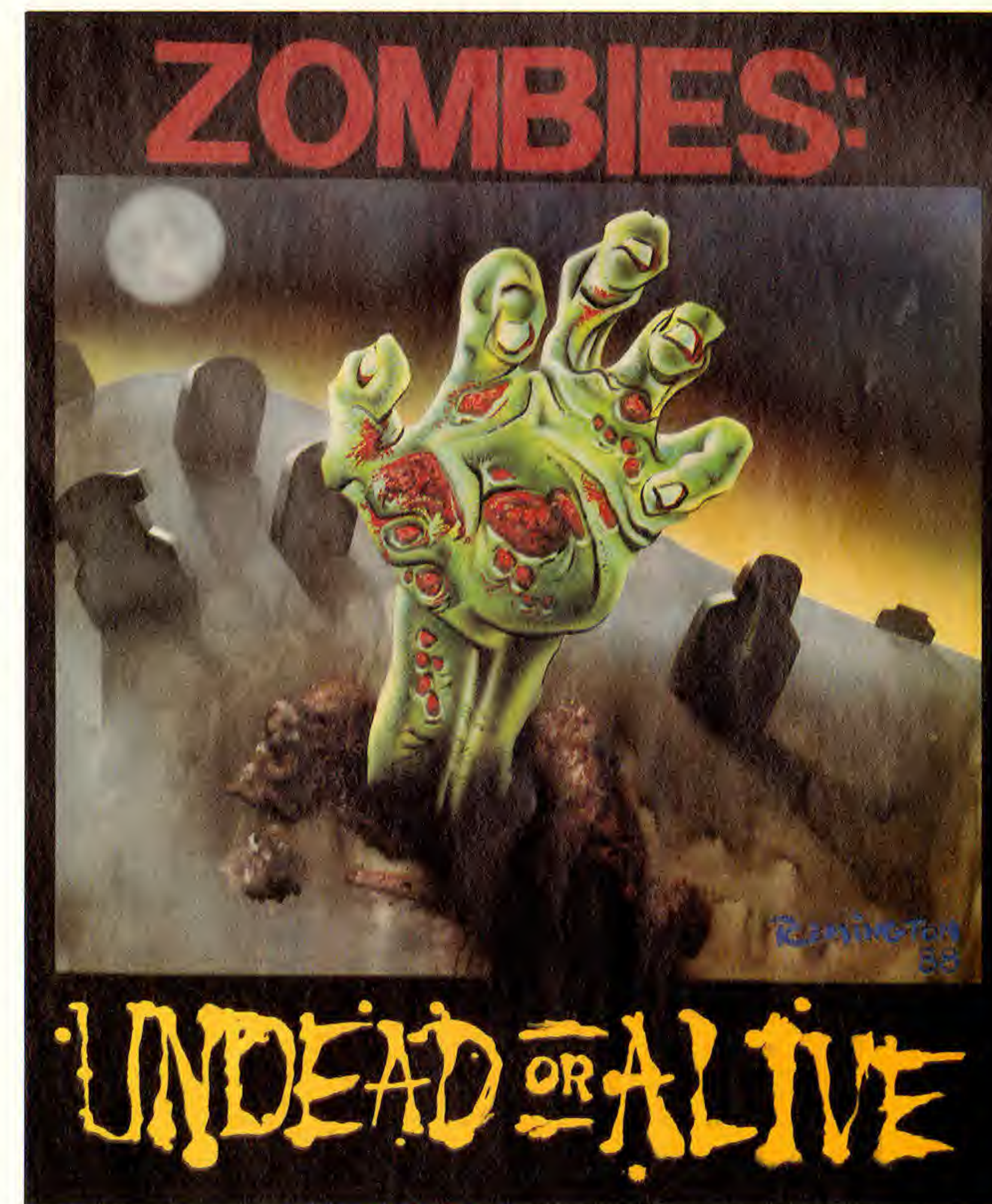
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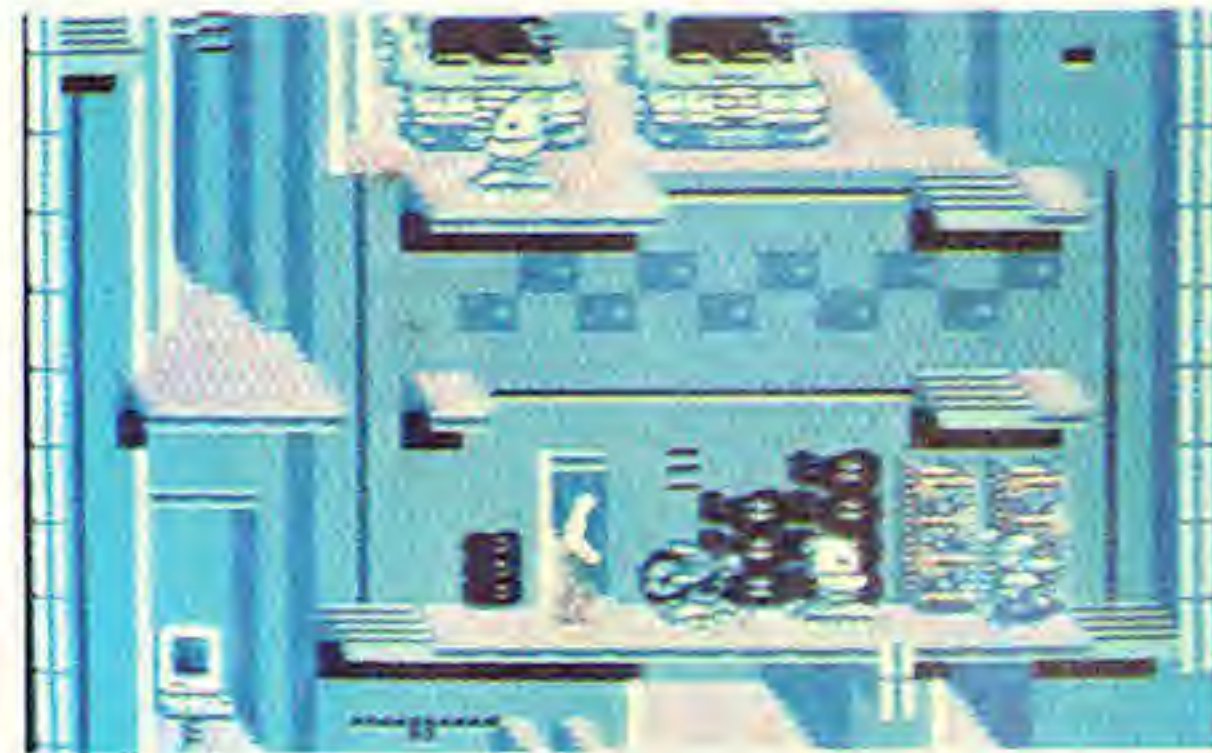
The Impossible Dream

By Rawson L. Stovall

It's that time again -- time to save the world from impending doom. The evil scientist Elvin Atombender has returned from his demise several years ago in Epyx's **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION** 2, to once again implement his dastardly deeds. This time he's the villain in **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION 2**, Epyx's latest game for the Commodore 64. It is also available for the Atari ST, and the IBM PC. Versions for the Apple II, Apple IIGS, and Amiga will be out later this year.

This sequel to **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION** marks the evil scientist's return. During the past few years he has grown in power and has resurfaced with a plot to dominate the world that would make even the coolest of governments bite their nails in horror.

As Field Agent 29, the player must complete the "Impossible" mission of foiling Atombender's devious plan. In order to succeed and prevent the destruction of the world, the player must break into Atombender's massive eight tower Los Angeles complex which is guarded by an immense security network consisting of many different types of mobile robots, locking passageways and secret codes and musical sequences. The evil scientist's vast computer network then must be neutralized so that it won't go through with its instructions to launch humanity-killing missiles with the touch of a finger. All of this must be done in a relatively short amount of time.



Before reaching the computer network, the player must search through many different rooms in the eight towers, somersaulting over time bombs, suicide robots, and land mines in order to find secret security code numbers. A correct three-digit code will allow the player to enter the other towers and eventually Atombender's control room. Furthermore, the player must always keep his eye out along the way for safes that hold six coded pieces of music, and for weapons that will aid the player in his quest to save the world.

The game play is very addicting -- and very hard. Every time my game is over, I return to the beginning to try again. Something in my subconscious tells me that no matter how difficult the game may be, I have a chance. I try countless times over to save our planet, but I just can't do it.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION 2 truly lives up to its name. The graphics and sounds are excellent and the game play is fast and compelling. The

only trouble is that to complete the mission in the given amount of time the player is simply asked to do the impossible. Moreover, the instruction booklet doesn't explain some things and sometimes skips over entire parts of the game.

I don't see how anyone can complete the mission. One time I spent nearly my entire time limit trying to finish one room! The game at times is so frustrating I felt like screaming. Yet instead, the addictive nature of the game prevailed and I opted to try it again. And again. And again. And again. Good thing the Fate of the world isn't in my hands.

Name: IMPOSSIBLE MISSION 2
Type: Action
Format: C-64, IBM, Atari ST, Apple II series, Amiga
Publisher: Epyx
Designers: Novotrade Software Studios
Ages: 12 & up
Requirements: none
*** Players: One**
Price: Atari ST, Amiga: \$49.95
all others: \$39.95

Ability Level: Advanced
Packaging: Good (7)
Documentation: Average (5)
Graphics: Very Good (9)
Playability: Good (8)

CP RATING: 7.70
Circle Reader Service Number 37.

Don't Blow It Out

By Rawson L. Stovall

Move over Casper--another new friendly ghost is about to take over your place and his name is **BUBBLE GHOST**. No, you won't find him on any cartoons or in any comic books, but you will find him as the star of an intriguing little computer game named after him --**BUBBLE GHOST** by Accolade.

In **BUBBLE GHOST** the player takes on the role of the caring, fiesty, little ghost who's sole purpose in life (well, the afterlife) is to safely blow a tiny delicate bubble through a 35-room, hazard-filled castle.

Each of the 35 rooms contains obstacles such as electric fans, candles, knives, scissors, as well as several different "technotraps" (clever little inventions) that can pop the bubble. The bubble pops any time it comes into contact with these various dangers.

Nearly every room in the castle is a puzzle that the player must solve in order to proceed through the castle safely. The game also has many different secrets that are not explained in the instruction booklet. For example, somewhere in the castle there is a candle. Whenever the bubble ghost tries to blow the bubble over it, it pops! However, if the ghost



were to blow towards the flame of the candle, then *maybe* the fire will go out. It's that simple, it's just common sense...

I don't like to use the word "unique" because it seems too overused. But **BUBBLE GHOST** is unique. There's no other way to explain it. The idea of maneuvering a little ghost around a castle blowing a bubble is truly unique. As far as originality goes, **BUBBLE GHOST** is tops. Nevertheless, the game play is fairly shallow (I mean, *all you do is blow around a bubble*). All of the pictures and graphics in the castle are **STRANGE**. It makes me think what life might be like in an Andy Warhol painting. *Strange...*

In a world where gruesome "blood and guts" movies such as **A NIGHTMARE ON ELM**

STREET, FRIDAY THE 13th, HALLOWEEN and **THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE** become immensely popular, it's comforting to know that somewhere is a castle far, far away (even if it is in a computer game) lives a spunky little ghost. And this ghost spends his precious time caring for a helpless bubble trapped in a castle filled with dangers.

Name: BUBBLE GHOST
Type: Action
Format: Apple IIGS, Amiga, Atari ST, C-64
Publisher: Accolade
Designer: Inforgrames
Ages: 5 & up
Requirements: MS-DOS: 256K;
other: optional
*** Players: One**
Price: C-64: \$29.95; all others \$34.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Good (7)
Documentation: Average (6)
Graphics: Excellent (9.5)
Playability: Average (6.5)

CP RATING: 7.13
Circle Reader Service Number 38.

Space Marines Hit the Breach

By Daniel Carr

"We Want You for the Federated Worlds Special Forces" says the box cover to **BREACH**. If you have read Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers* then you'll have a good handle on what this game is about. **BREACH** is a tactical-level game in which you can lead squads of up to 20 marines equipped with 20 different types of weapons into battle, destroy everything in sight and achieve some objective specified by one of the many scenarios that comes with the game. Some scenarios require you to rescue prisoners, capture data packs along with killing a certain percentage of opponents.

The game is a nice combination of role-playing and conventional wargame. On the wargame side, each of your men is individually moved around on a large "board" (though only a small portion can be seen on the screen at any time) by pointing and clicking on a square you want him to move. Only horizontal and vertical movement is allowed. (This is true for combat too.) Each man has a set number of movement points which are used to move across terrain and perform tasks such as firing a blaster. With role-playing, each man has different stats relating how well he can shoot, carry, operate a detection and crack unit and showing his current health.

Key to the game are your men. There are five types of marines consisting of marauders, scouts, infiltrators, psionic talents and finally the squad leader. Marauders will make up the bulk of your

squad. They are tough, mobile, have good accuracy and can carry plenty of weapons. Scouts have light armor, but are very fast and are good with detectors (gadgets used to locate mission objectives). Infiltrators are like scouts but have a smaller gun and usually carry crack units (These will give you a "floor plan" of the surrounding area). Psionic talents have a weak gun but can mentally "stun" an enemy, rendering him or it inert next turn.

The squad leader is the most important man. The program will save him from game to game and will check to see if any of his stats improve. This, however, will only occur if he does something--shoots an enemy or uses a detector. So the objective is to season your leader by making him fight and survive from scenario to scenario and raising his stats to "star" level in order to take on the harder scenarios.

There are a variety of weapons for your squad to use. Each marine has inherent gear consisting of a blaster (with limited ammo) and a suit of body armor. Other weapons (which vary with the scenario) include grenades, rocket launchers, demolition charges, first aid kits, and grav belts.

As for bad guys, there are a lot of them. You have enemy marines and aliens equipped like your own men, beasts that bite, battle robots that are very tough to destroy, autoguns that are like battle robots but can't move and finally overlords with vibroswords and psionics.

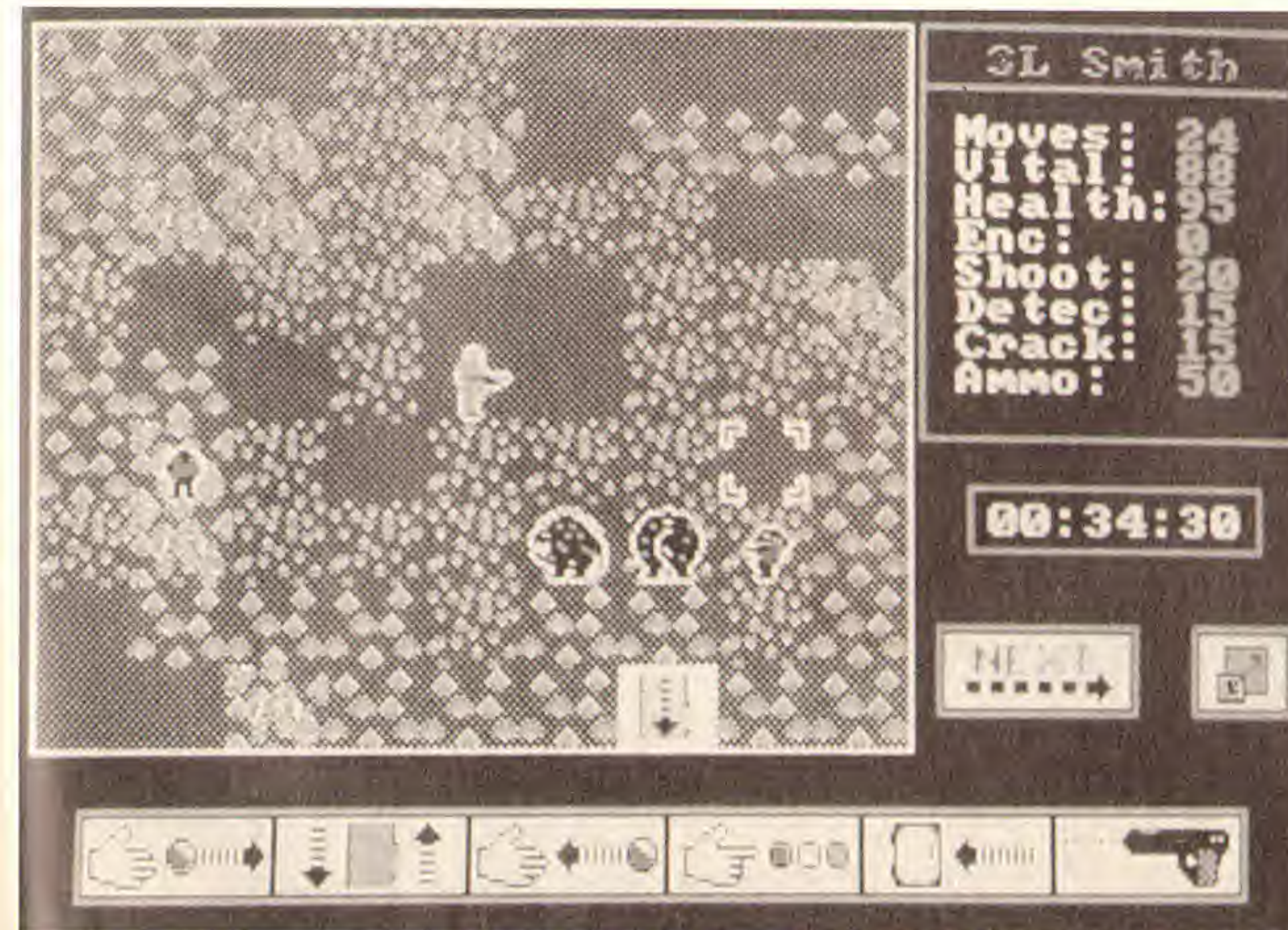
The game also includes a very extensive scenario builder. All of the terrain, weapons and

enemy types used in the scenarios are here and you can come up with some very wild and weird scenarios to put your troopers through. Plus you can alter the scenarios that come with the game. Note that while this might spoil the "surprise" element of exploring, you can put together some pretty tough missions where combat is the goal.

There is only a few things to complain about. One is that starting a scenario requires a bit of work. A window must be opened to choose a mission, then another must be opened to get a squad leader and finally the game must be named and saved before you can start play. Also, if your SL dies, you must exit the program and generate a new one through the scenario builder. This requires heavy use of the mouse and would work better if the SL's name were set as a user specified default, (with the program generating a new one if he dies). Then all you have to do is hit a key to bring up the scenario menu, point-click twice for the mission and the current SL you're using would be incorporated automatically.

Another problem is that all the marine types are exactly the same. The SL, marauders, etc., are all the same size, shape and color. With such a graphically sharp game, this is disappointing since with many marines (up to twenty) on the map, it gets to be a pain when you forget who's what and must cycle through each soldier to find the one you want. The game would be easier to play if more detail went into the figures, such as a different color for each type of marine.

To conclude, however, **BREACH** is an excellent game. There's lots of action. The graphics are clear and detailed, showing off terrain, rockets and laser beams nicely. The sound effects are good, with loud explosions and enemy screaming when they are blown up. Some nice touches include a door, when opened, makes the same swooshing sound as a door on the old *Star Trek* series.



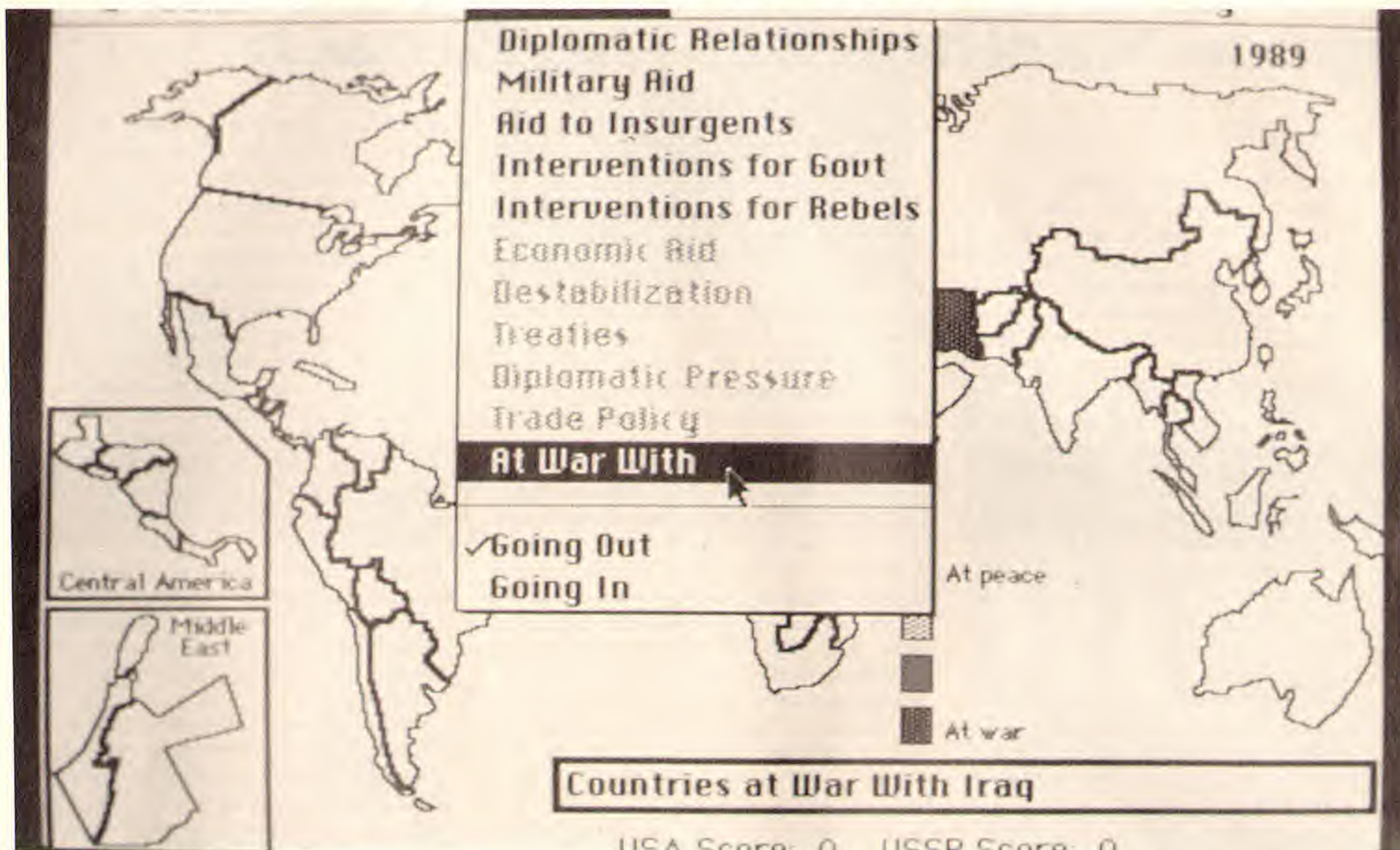
Targeting the enemy in Breach.

Name: BREACH
Type: Adventure
Formats: Amiga, Atari ST
Publisher: Omnitrend Software
Designers: William G.M. Leslie III
and Thomas R. Carbone
Ages: 10 & up
Requirements: 512K
*** Players: One**
Price: \$39.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Very Good (9)
Documentation: Very Good (9)
Graphics/Text: Very Good (9)
Playability: Good (7)

CP RATINGS: 8.00
Circle Reader Service Number 20.

Don't Touch that Button



By Rawson L. Stovall

My afternoon wasn't going so hot. Rome was burning. Well, actually they were just experiencing a coup d'etat -- the overthrowing of a government using political factors rather than military ones. But despite my concern over the "changing of the guard in Greece", all of my attention was focused on the intense situation in Pakistan.

Life was going just fine. Oh, sure I was having my usual problems with the many different African nations--but, hey, who doesn't? Then it happened. The Soviet Union wasn't content in just taking over Afghanistan. They *had* to go and meddle with Pakistan. They *had* to fund the rebels and incite riots. They *had* to provoke assassinations and send 100,000 troops to support the insurgency. When President Reagan said, "Make my day", I doubt he ment a day like that.

BALANCE OF POWER: THE 1990 EDITION is available for the Macintosh, MS-DOS (IBM), and Commodore Amiga. Players assume the role of either the United States President or the General Secretary of the Soviet Union. The objective is to complete eight years in office (1989-1997) without initiating a nuclear war while also dealing with global politics and foreign relations.

To win "prestige points" the player can use diplomatic tools, including military aid, economic aid, and treaties in order to influence both friendly and unfriendly countries. The

game includes a gigantic statistical database that provides the player with vast information on every single country included as well as artificial intelligence to make the game seem more realistic.

In 1985 a personal computer game named **BALANCE OF POWER** was released. David Aaron, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs called the game, "The most sophisticated strategic simulation in America other than Pentagon war games". Much has happened since 1985, so Chris Crawford, designer of **BALANCE OF POWER** wrote a new edition of the game.

BALANCE OF POWER: THE 1990 EDITION is that new edition. It features a multi-polar level where minor countries also pursue active foreign relations policies, making the game more realistic. It also includes 80 countries (the old game only had 62) as well as an updated database and faster processing capabilities.

BALANCE OF POWER: THE 1990 EDITION is the best, most complex strategy game ever! I once thought that the original game was, but obviously the latest version has much more to offer--though both games deserve awards.

Defcon 3. The precious balance of power has just tilted. Pakistan is a close US ally--we can't just sit back and watch it being brutally taken over. Therefore, 100,000 US troops enter the Pakistani crisis. Terrorism in Pakistan is rampant. India supports the Soviets. The Soviets give a

billion dollars to the insurgency. The country's stability is weakening very fast -- Defcon 2. US and Soviet troops clash--Defcon 1.

The game stops and the screen goes blank. Suddenly, this message appears: You have ignited an accidental nuclear war. And no, there is no animated display of a mushroom cloud with parts of bodies flying through the air...We do not reward failure.

Name: BALANCE OF POWER: THE 1990 EDITION

Type: Simulation

Format: Macintosh, IBM, Amiga

Publisher: Mindscape, Inc.

Designers: Chris Crawford

Ages: 12 & up

Requirements: Mac: 512K, 800K drive monochrome only

*** Players: 1 to 2**

Price: \$49.95

Ability Level:

Advanced

Packaging:

Good (7)

Documentation:

Very Good (9)

Graphics:

Very Good (8.5)

Realism:

Excellent (9.8)

Playability:

Excellent (9.8)

CP RATING:

9.24

Circle Reader Service Number 35.

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Lunarium Mining Zombies Threaten Earth

By Rusel DeMaria

These are desperate times. The Nazi war machine has stumbled onto the secret of lunarium and is mining the stuff on the moon. Lunarium bombs lower the IQ of males by 30 points (they don't seem to affect females). The famed professor Barnstorff and his beautiful daughter, Jane, have been kidnapped. They will be brainwashed into Nazi zombie slaves--helping the enemy make bombs. The plan: drop a few bombs on Washington, and the swastika will hang from the White House in a few minutes less than no time at all.

Only you, **Rocket Ranger**, can save the professor (and his daughter). Only you can save the world. Are you up to the task?

Once again, Cinemaware has given us a first-rate movie-on-a-disk. This time, the theme is the old 40's serials. You may or may not remember them--the ones with the guy flying through the air with his rocket pack on his back, his wrist monitor, and his radium pistol. Maybe you don't remember it, but it doesn't matter. The game is fun even if you never saw the originals, but it's

all the more entertaining if it takes you down nostalgia lane.

This is much more than a passive movie, however. This is a game that includes a lot of strategy, arcade-like action, and a good deal of luck. Don't expect to save the world the first time you play. It takes time to learn the ropes, and you'll fail more than once along the way.

The idea is to use your spies (five of them at the beginning of the game) to find the Nazi rocket factories and steal enough rocket parts to make your own ship. You also have to find the lunarium processing plants and steal the stuff to power both your own moon rocket and the rocket pack.

This is a game of timing, and you must check your War Room map for reports from spies scattered in various countries around the globe. Then, you must fly to different parts of the world attacking the various Nazi installations. You must load the exact amount of lunarium to get to each location--the information is found on the Rocket Ranger Code Wheel (which serves as the only copy protection for the game. If you load the improper amount of lunarium, you either

die, or you end up in deep trouble).

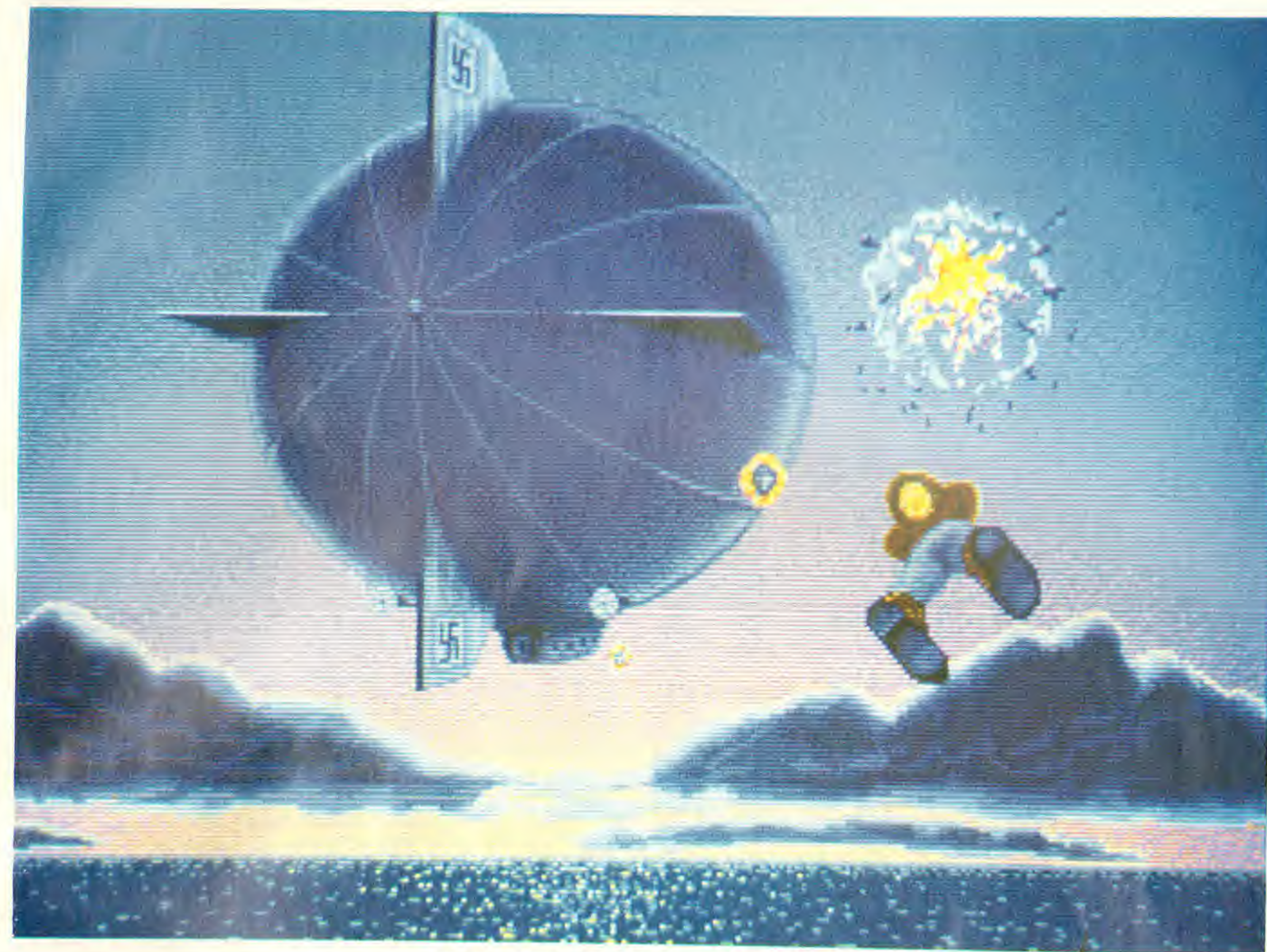
You have to keep moving your spies around to find the rocket parts and the other bases. Raid various key Nazi installations to slow down the march of their military machine. Organize resistance movements (via your spies) to further hamper the Nazis. But, most of all, find those rocket parts and get the lunarium!

There are basically seven action sequences--taking off from your base at Ft. Dix; attacking a zeppelin in mid-flight; fighting Nazi planes; blasting ack ack batteries at night; shooting your way into a jungle temple (which houses a lunarium plant); fist fighting a Nazi gurd; obtaining a rocket part; and, finally, fighting the Nazi zombie women on the moon to foil the Nazi plans.

Each action sequence requires different skills, and it may take some time to develop an understanding of how they work. The most entertaining is probably the first fight. The graphics in this scene are excellent, and the realism is sufficient to make it a fine boxing simulation in its own right. You can throw body punches, jabs, uppercuts, and devastating



Nazi moon base in *Rocket Ranger*.



Rocket Ranger attacking Zeppelin.

hooks. You can also block high or low. Your adversary has a similar arsenal, and, though beating the first guard (for the first rocket part) is easy, later guards seem to learn from the mistakes of their colleague, so look out!

I found the planes hardest to shoot down. Sometimes I did it with ease; other times, I failed. Attacking the zeppelin is also hard--remember, they used highly flammable hydrogen in those days! An errant shot, and it's bye bye zep.

Rocket Ranger is lots of fun, though it does take some patience and persistence. If at first you don't succeed... Also, on faster PCs, you may want to use the slow down key (the minus key), since the game zips along entirely too fast on machines above 15 megahertz. I used a public domain utility called AT-Slow before running Rocket Ranger to slow my Compaq Deskpro 386S down to manageable speeds. Even displaying the excellent EGA graphics, the program was too fast without some slowing. Another caveat: You may experience some irregularities playing with a joystick on machines above 15 megahertz. It's not definite, but it can happen.

One of the side effects of this game is that you learn a lot of geography as you place spies and fly around the globe. I'm sure this wasn't design-

ed to be an educational game, exactly, but it's a nice feature.

The graphics in this game are, like other Cinemaware titles, very good. At EGA resolution, the colors are vibrant, the images clear and precise, and the action is smooth. Other than occasional problems with the joystick (mentioned above), I found this game played very well, and the controls were sensible and easy to learn. Although the PC speaker is not noted for its musical abilities, some entertaining tunes accompany parts of the game.

You can pause Rocket Ranger if you get called away, but you can't save the game at any point. Therefore, you need to complete any game in progress. One aspect of the game is luck. If you are lucky, you'll find a lunarium factory early in the game. If you are unlucky, you may find yourself still searching for rocket parts as the Nazis move in on Washington. Still, unlike the real world, you can always start another game after witnessing the fall of the free world. And you'll probably want to try again...and again.

I found this game to be both exciting and frustrating. It's not easy. As fast as you work, the enemy is working, too. You can slow them down somewhat, but you have to manage your

resources--spies, lunarium stash, time--skillfully to succeed. I guess the fun of this game is that there is a learning curve. Practice does make, if not perfect, then at least better.

I think Rocket Ranger will appeal to a wide range of game players. It's got action, strategy, and challenge all mixed into an imaginative and graphically satisfying package.

Name: *ROCKET RANGER*
Type: Strategy/Action
Formats: IBM, Amiga
Publisher: Cinemaware
Ages: 10 to Adult
Requirements: CGA, EGA, VGA;
 384K required
Players: One
Price: IBM PC (reviewed here) and
 Amiga versions \$49.95;
 Commodore 64/128 version \$34.95
Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Excellent (9.2)
Documentation: Very Good (9)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.5)
Playability: Very Good (9)

CP RATINGS: 9.15
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Role Playing in a Planetary System



One of the fighting screens for *Phantasy Stars*.

By **Rusel DeMaria**

Many people may see *Phantasy Star* as Sega's answer to Nintendo's *Legend of Zelda*. It is more or less inevitable that comparisons will be made, so I'll start off by saying that, although they are both role playing games, they are very different kinds of games.

Phantasy Star is a very traditional role-playing game, similar to the *Dungeons and Dragons* motif, or the *Wizardry* games on home computers. The skills necessary to succeed at this game include puzzle solving, mapping (lots of mapping), and persistence. Though this game might be fun to play without using those skills, it is unlikely that anyone could really get very far in the game without careful attention to detail.

Phantasy Star takes place in a planetary system some time in the future. The main character is Alis, and she has accepted a quest to avenge her brother's death and rid the solar system of the evil sorcerer, Lassie. To do so, she

will need the help of three allies--Odin, a powerful warrior; Noah, a sorcerer; and Myau, an unearthly feline. However, Alis begins the game alone, and she must find her friends as well as a long list of other objects. In fact, once you have deciphered the clues and read the manual (whichever comes first), you will have quite a shopping list of objects--weapons, armor, magical items, and miscellaneous stuff--to find. The manual kindly offers a complete list of objects that exist in the game.

As usual in these games, most of the characters/monsters that you meet are unfriendly, and it is by dispatching them that you gain experience and money. Also, as usual, you begin with only a few hit points, so you can be killed easily. However, recharging your characters is usually not a problem--most cities, towns, and villages have a place where you can rest up and get strong again. Also, the cities and towns are populated with people who usually offer clues, and sometimes interact in other ways. And,

although most are unfriendly, and all will fight, some of the monsters and people you meet outside the towns are actually intelligent and will provide further clues, if you know how to communicate with them.

There's magic in this game; in fact, magic plays a large role in helping you to complete the game. Alis and her crew can cast different spells. Myau and Noah are the most potent spell casters while Alis can acquire knowledge of a few useful spells. Odin, alas, is strong and willing but never learned magic. However, he can wield various projectile weapons that appear here and there, and can be a big help in battle.

I don't know the exact statistics, but there are a lot of dungeons, caves, and towers to explore--on three different worlds. When you enter a dungeon, the view shifts from an overhead view of Alis and her crew to a head-on 3D view of the maze itself. Of course the background music

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Circle Reader Service Number 55.

Other Ports

By Rusel DeMaria

This month, I looked at some new titles for the Mac and the IIGS, and a few ports from other systems.

Top on my list of new titles for the Mac are two games where you try to find a little action --of different kinds --*Road Racer* from PCAI, and *Romantic Encounters at the Dome* from Microillusions.

Road Racer is from the people who brought us *MacRacketball* and *MacGolf*. This one features a '65 Corvette and a series of country driving courses. Using the 4-speed manual transmission, you can practically fly around the curves and attain speeds up to 200 MPH on the straightaways. Your main challenge is time -- you must complete the course before time runs out. The good news is that you can't actually destroy your car or yourself when you crash (which you will do). The bad news is that you lose precious time as you start your way up the gears again.

You control the car with the mouse. One thing that takes some getting used to, if you play a lot of driving type games, is the lack of mobility of your car. This Corvette has a fairly wide turning radius, and at least when you first play, you have a tendency to try to make turns that you just can't make. However, the steering limitations are part of what makes this game a challenge.

The visuals in *Road Racer* are great. The Corvette is a digitized image of the real car; the scenery is interesting and varied. However, you won't have time to enjoy the scenery all that much. You'll be too busy trying to stay on the road. At the high speeds you can attain, the

curves come up fast, and the telephone poles, rocks, and trees that line the road often have chance encounters with the front end of your car.

Speaking of chance encounters, *Romantic Encounters at the Dome* is an R-rated mostly text adventure that temporarily enrolls you at The Dome, a fictitious private club in an "ultra-posh section of Los Angeles." You get to spend an evening hobnobbing with the assorted guests of this club, and they are quite an assortment.

The object of this game is to play a male or female (your choice) visitor to The Dome. Of course, your goal is to meet people. From there, you see what happens. It all depends on how you interact with the people you meet. You might spend a pleasant few minutes in conversation, and that's it. Or, you might get lucky. You might even get shot by a jealous boyfriend. You never know.

Romantic Encounters at The Dome is an amusing adult fantasy game. There are enough graphics in the game to keep it interesting, though it is primarily a text adventure. Though it is R-rated and not recommended for those under 16, it is not seamy or pornographic. Mostly it is pretty suggestive, but not much more. It's more a game of interpersonal strategy than lovemaking.

Along those lines, there is also a Love Testing sequence in the game where you can find out about your sexual IQ. The Love Testing itself is a pretty interesting aspect of this game.

New on the Apple IIGS is *Warlock* from 360 Pacific.

Warlock is a fast paced arcade game reminiscent of *Dark Castle*, though less complex. Being less complex doesn't mean easy, however. In this game, you must play the part of a warlock whose

job it is to cross a multi-level landscape of ghouls, ghosts, goblins, gargoyles, fire breathing giants, and a host of other creepy characters, obtaining the stolen Karna jewel and several other magic items along the way. The graphics and action in this game are intense and you must battle time and your own rapidly depleting power level to successfully complete the quest. Some of the items you need are guarded by nasty creatures, and it takes more than just shooting to win. You need a little strategy from time to time.

The enemies in *Warlock* seem endless. You can clear a screen of zombies, only to be surrounded moments later. The game is fun, though a bit violent and hectic.

Times of Lore (from Origin Systems for the Apple II series) is a bit more subdued than *Warlock*, and contains a more elaborate adventure game along with its arcade-like action. In *Time of Lore*, you find yourself in a time of swords and sorcery. The game's history is told in the form of a short story in the manual. Suffice it to say that you are on a quest to restore order to the kingdom, and, hopefully, to assume the role of High King. But your origins are humble, and you must prove yourself by undertaking tasks of increasing difficulty.

To begin with, you will want to interact with some of the friendly characters in the game, accept information and, eventually, accept your first quest. However, once you leave the relative safety of the cities, you are beleaguered by an assortment of unfriendly characters, and you'll have to fight your way to your current goal. Along the way, you may pick up weapons, gold, or magic potions. Fighting is fairly simple, and involves whacking away at the enemy characters, or, in some cases, using magic against them.

This is a true role playing game in the sense that you must build your character through experience. It is somewhat arcade like in the way it plays, but it contains a fairly well developed plot and a series of quests and tasks. You can save the game at a city inn, so you don't have to play it all in one setting. Also, if you die along the way, you can start over at your last save.

Graphics in *Times of Lore* are good, and feature an overhead view of a world that includes different kinds of buildings, roads, paths, bridges, lakes and rivers, forests, and more.

Also appearing on the IIGS are ports of other games - *California Games* from Epyx, *MiniPutt* and *Serve and Volley* from Accolade, *Rampage* from Activision...

Finally, this month I want to mention a new product from Epyx. It's for the Atari ST, and it's called *Art and Film Director*. Though I haven't had a chance to work with this product yet, it looks like something to check out. It includes a full paint program with a cell animation systems for making your own cartoons. The package includes some fine drawing tools as well as animation tools like tweening. It will also work with pictures from NEOchrome and Degas Elite. You can even record your cartoons onto your VCR to produce your own shows. *Art and Film Director* joins Microillusion's *Cel Animator* for the Amiga as one of those programs designed to encourage true creativity.



Phantasy Star shops.

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changes, too. During battle and while interacting with other characters, the scene changes, too, so that you can see a closeup of the other character. The graphics are very nice, fast, well-drawn, and colorful. Some of the graphic effects are enjoyable, though, once you have played the game for hours and hours, the graphic quality begins to be unimportant.

Dungeons are tricky. They feature many twisting passages, pit traps, hidden doors, and, worst of all, many, many doors leading to different levels and paths. On a given level, you might find several doors leading up or down. That makes mapping more difficult since you often have to create little scattered bits and pieces of mazes.

Most of the puzzles in the game are easy to figure, but a few are pretty hard. Fortunately, you can save up to five games on the cartridge, so you can always take care to back up your progress. In fact, you can back up any game to any save game slot. I used one game for my master game, another for incremental saves during dungeon explorations, and a third sometimes when a dungeon branched in many places (to keep one save back at the branch and explore the other branches one at a time).

If you don't take precautions, you are likely to run out of hit points before you complete your explorations. Only in towns and villages are you

safe from attack by enemies, so you must be ever on the alert.

The most salient quality that a role player must have is patience. You can't be in too much of a hurry, or you'll likely miss important, but subtle details.

Even though you begin the quest knowing who your main enemy is, you don't know where he is. Nor do you know what you will encounter along the way. It turns out that one of your main foes is Medusa, and she won't be easily defeated. In fact, you may spend most of the game seeking the necessary equipment to defeat Medusa, and by the time you do, you will probably be almost ready for Lassic, himself.

This game is a mongrelized collection of names and legends from various nationalities. Myau is a funny name; it is equally odd to find Noah, Odin, and Medusa in the same game. There are also a few surprising, and humorous typos in the game, though they do not detract from its playability.

All in all, *Phantasy Star* is a great adventure for the patient, careful, persistent traveller. It is pretty typical from the roll playing standpoint--lots of violence, killing and monsters. On the other hand, it is to be commended for casting a heroine in the leading role.

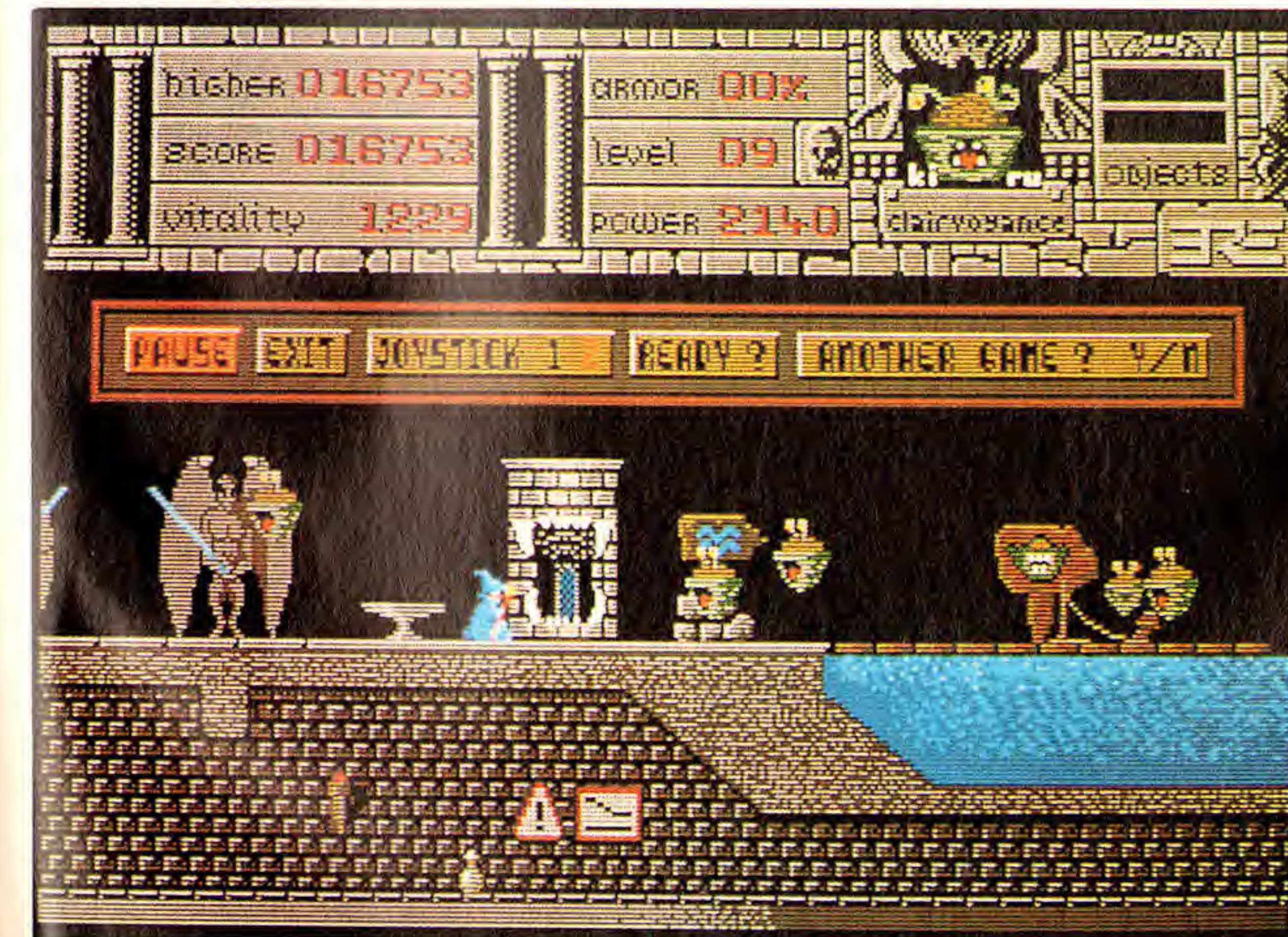
Finally, back to the inevitable comparisons with *Legend of Zelda*; One major difference is that, in *Zelda*, you control the battles directly

with Link. In *Phantasy Star*, you choose whether to attack, use magic, use an item, talk to the being, or run. In that comparison, *Zelda* is more like an arcade game, and *Phantasy Star* is more traditional of role playing games. Of course, the detail and mapping in *Phantasy Star* is much greater, though *Zelda* still has its share of secrets and tricks that make it fun. Overall, I hesitate to lead anyone to compare the two games--they are very different--but to enjoy whichever one you can get your hands on.

Name: PHANTASY STAR
Type: Role Playing Adventure
Formats: Sega Game Machine
Publisher: Sega
Ages: 12 & up
Requirements: Sega machine
*** Players:** One
(room for 5 saved games)
Price: \$70.00

Ability Level:	Intermediate
Packaging:	Very Good (8.2)
Documentation:	Very Good (8.7)
Graphics/Text:	Good (8)
Realism:	Excellent (9.3)
Playability:	Excellent (9.5)

CP RATING: 9.20
Circle Reader Service Number 40.



Warlock from 360 Pacific

Channel Three Sega and Atari

By Rusel DeMaria

Big news from Sega recently was the introduction of *Phantasy Star*, their roll-playing adventure. See the review elsewhere in this issue. Also from Sega is *Thunder Blade*, a helicopter mission with a twist. Although *Thunder Blade* begins as a traditional overhead view game, it shifts to a three dimensional, line of sight game that provides additional appeal. Basically, you just have to survive the endless waves of enemy helicopters, planes, tanks, and ships that try to shoot you down. You take as many with you as possible. You earn points for each successful kill, and at the end of each stage of the action, you get

additional bonus points. New ships are awarded when you score enough points.

The action in *Thunder Blade* is pretty much non-stop. You shoot air-to-air 30mm automatic cannon, and, for ground and sea enemies, you have the air to ground missiles. You'll often find yourself shooting down enemy planes while attempting to line up an enemy on the ground. Since you can only shoot one missile at a time, you must make them count.

Three new Sega titles should be just coming out from Mediagenic. They are *Rampage*, *Cyborg Hunter*, and *Bomber Raid*.

Bomber Raid is a challenging game in which you play a pilot on a series of bombing raids. The

idea is to survive hordes of planes and other airborne enemies while attacking various battleships. Along the way, you can pick up extra capabilities and special weapons. You can shoot traditional automatic fire, or use your bombs to destroy ships. You can also build a fleet of planes to fly with you by picking up special objects that give you support planes.

Bomber Raid is fairly easy to play, but contains a lot of options and lots of action. It requires some considerable dexterity.

Cyborg Hunter is an adventure game in which you must infiltrate and explore an enemy base. Taking elevators through different parts of the complex, you must find and use various weapons and armor to make your way to the final confrontation with the enemy. This game requires quick reactions and a mastery of various fighting techniques. You can obtain many objects including a rocket backpack, various shields and weapons, and more. Your use of some special abilities is limited by the amount of energy you have.

The graphics in *Cyborg Hunter* are very good, and the game is fun, though relatively easy to complete--with dedication. The casual player may find the game less easy to penetrate.

Finally, *Rampage* is a port of the popular coin-op game in which you play one of three monsters bent on destroying one city after another. You find yourself tearing down buildings in San Francisco, Chicago, St. Louis, and on... This is a very faithful reproduction of the coin-op game, and the first one I've seen that satisfies me. I've seen other versions on home computer machines, but they were too slow. In this game, the action is smooth and fast. You can play one or two players at a time, and enjoy the somewhat grisly thrill of eating helpless victims, bashing tanks and helicopters, and perhaps electrocuting yourself on a neon sign.

For monster movie fans, this one is a must.



Start game graphics for *Phantasy Star*.

Food Fight

By Rawson L. Stovall

I have always wanted to participate in a food fight -- a real knockdown food fight like the ones I've seen on episodes of *The Three Stooges*. However, the one day a food fight broke out at my high school cafeteria, I was absent. That day, according to my friends, pickles, pizza, hamburgers, ice cream, mashed potatoes, and salad flew everywhere. And to believe that I missed it!

FOOD FIGHT by Atari for the XE game system and XE/XL computers is designed to satisfy this childhood fantasy of being a part of a food fight --without the mess. Too bad the game isn't all that great.

The game's story line is all about Charley. Charley loves to eat. One day he visited the carnival and went straight to the Food Fight contest. In this contest, Charley hurls mounds and mounds of spinach, bananas, watermelon, tomatoes, and cream pies at disgruntled chefs. These chefs, however, fight back. And if he gets hit, the chefs finish him off under a mountain of mush. If Charley does well, then there's a gigantic ice cream cone as a reward just waiting for him.

Charley, though, has to hurry. That's because if he waits around too long then the ice cream will melt. And if it melts, then Charley doesn't



have enough incentive to go on -- so he quits and the cooks take that opportunity to nail him.

The player controls Charley. Charley moves around the screen, picking up food from piles and throwing them at the chefs who pop up out of manholes. The object isn't to hit as many chefs as possible because they just keep coming and coming. The object is to get across the screen to the ice cream cone -- that's it! Run across the screen, hit a few chefs with food, eat some ice cream and then go on to the next wave which is practically the same thing over and over and over.

The one thing that struck me about this game

(as does most of the latest Atari XE games) is that the game is so darn repetitious. After the first screen (which only takes about 15 seconds to complete) the player has seen it all! Oh, in later waves there may be more cooks, different foods to throw, or different colored ice cream, but the extremely simple game play itself doesn't change at all.

The XE game system (which is the old Atari 800 in disguise) can have very good games. The XE will accept any old 400/800 or 800XL cartridge games. I grabbed some of those games that I haven't played in years and tried them out on the XE game system. The quality of those 3-5 year-old games such as Activision's *THE DREADNAUGHT FACTOR* and *PAST FINDER* as well as Parker Brothers' *MONTEZUMA'S REVENGE* and *GYRUSS* far surpassed the quality of what Atari is currently offering. Don't ask me why -- ask Atari.

Grabbing pies and spinach left and right I toss my heart's delight towards the cooks. More cooks come, and ice cream melts further. I run to the ice cream, but I'm too late -- it's melted. All of the cooks laugh and I am pelted with entire screen full of food. Big deal! *FOOD FIGHT* isn't all that it's cracked up to be. Come to think of it, a real food fight might not be all that great, either.

One-on-One Basketball

By Rawson L. Stovall

It's like a dream come true -- playing one-on-one with "Dr. J" Julius Irving or Larry Bird. In **ONE-ON-ONE BASKETBALL** BY Atari for the XE game system, the player assumes the role of either Dr. J or Larry Bird in a one-on-one game with the other. The player can play the computer or a friend.

According to the instructions, the capabilities of you and your opponent will be just like those of Irving's and Bird's. In other words, the computer knows their shooting percentages and their pet shots. The player's scoring ability will depend on his timing, how great the opponent is at guarding, and from what position the player is shooting.

Sometimes the player will make an exciting play and the computer will freeze the game play for a few seconds and display an instant replay. One time in the middle of my game, the computer cut right in and displayed an instant replay. It was a nice touch, but in my opinion, the play that it "instant replayed" wasn't much different than my other plays.



The sounds are just about the worst I have ever heard! The roar of the crowd sounds more like someone barfing into a microphone with a static-filled speaker turned on full blast. Sorry, but that's the best way I can describe it. There are no sounds of squeaking shoes or the "swish" of the basket -- just the sounds of the crowd, and the dribble of the ball. The only way to play this

game is with the volume turned off.

The game is quite slow and uneventful --sometimes you make a shot, sometimes you don't. The tempo of the game speeds up a bit if you're playing a friend, the time is running out, and the score is very close. Also, once I shattered the backboard which was somewhat thrilling, but as a whole the game is really slow action-wise.

Also, *ONE-ON-ONE BASKETBALL* has very limited game play. You shoot two-pointers, you shoot three-pointers, you block, steal, and run around a bit, but that is all. You don't control a whole team, you don't have anyone to pass to, you don't have complex strategies to learn --what you see is what you get. Although the idea of having certain capabilities is very interesting, it doesn't make up for the limited game play.

Once again, Atari has turned a potentially great game into a bomb. The sounds, the slow action, as well as the limited game play, all transform this game into a waste of money -- a waste of money for both the consumer and Atari. As far as a game of one-on-one basketball goes, I prefer the backyard, gymnasium or driveway version.

Game Company Addresses

Abracadata Box 2440 Eugene, OR 97402 503-342-3030	Broderbund 17 Paul Dr. San Rafael, CA 94903 800-527-6263	Infocom 125 Cambridge Park Dr. Cambridge, MA 02140 617-492-6000	Mindscape 3444 Dundee Rd. Northbrook, IL 60062 800-221-9884	Sierra On-Line Box 485 Coarsegold, CA 93614 800-344-7448
Absolute Entertainment 215 Rock Rd. Glen Rock, NJ 07452 201-652-1227	CAPCOM, USA 1283-C Mountain View Sunnyvale, CA 94089 408-745-7081	Interstel Box 57825 Webster, TX 77598 713-486-4163	Muse Software 5 West Ridgeville Blvd. Mount Airy, MD 21771 301-831-7090	Sir-Tech Software Box 245 Ogdensburg, NY 13669 315-393-6633
Access Software 545 West 5th South Bountiful, UT 84010 800-824-2549	Cinemaware 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd. Westlake Village, CA 91362 805-379-9401	Intracorp 14160 SW 139th Court Miami, FL 33186 305-252-9040	New World Computing Box 7286 Mountain View, CA 94043 415-960-0410	Software Toolworks 13557 Ventura Blvd. Sherman Oaks, CA 91423 818-907-6789
Accolade Inc. 550 S. Winchester Blvd. #200 San Jose, CA 95128 408-985-1700	Cosmi Corp. 1431 N. Figueroa St. Wilmington, CA 90744 213-835-9687	Joker Software P.O. Box 22380 Gilroy, CA 95021-2380 408-848-4391	Nintendo 4820 150th Ave. N.E. Redmond, WA 98052 800-633-3236	Spectrum HoloByte 2061 Challenger Dr. Alameda, CA 94501 415-522-3584
ActionSoft 210 W. Springfield Ave. Champaign, IL 61820 217-398-8388	Data East USA 470 Needles Dr. San Jose, CA 95112 408-286-7074	Keypunch Software 1221 Pioneer Bldg. St. Paul, MN 55101 612-292-1490	Ocean Isle Software Ocean Isle Square #3 Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28459 919-579-8728	SSG 1747 Orleans Ct. Walnut Creek, CA 94598 415-932-3019
Actionware 38 W255 Deerpath Rd. Batavia, IL 60510 312-879-8998	DataSoft 19808 Nordhoff Place Chatsworth, CA 91311 818-886-5922	Koei Corp. 20000 Mariner Ave. #100 Torrance, CA 90503 213-542-6444	Omnitrend Box 733 W. Simsbury, CT 06092 203-658-6917	Strategic Simulations 1046 N. Rengstroff Ave. Mountain View, CA 94043 415-964-1353
Activision/Medienagenic 2350 Bayshore Pkwy. Mountain View, CA 94043 415-529-0500	Discovery Software 163 Conduit St. Annapolis, MD 21401 301-268-9877	Konami 815 Mittel Dr. Wood Dale, IL 60191 312-595-1443	Origin Systems 136 Harvey Rd. #B Londonderry, NH 03053 603-644-3360	SubLogic Box 4019 Champaign, IL 61820 800-637-4983
Alpha Tec 2901 Wayzata Blvd. Minneapolis, MN 55405 612-374-3232	Dolphin Marine Systems Box 188 Downington, PA 19335 215-269-6800	Logical Design Works 780 Montague Expwy. #403 San Jose, CA 95131 408-435-1445	Paragon Software 600 Rugh St. Greensburgh, PA 15601 412-838-1166	Sun Corp. 2250 Emhurst Rd. Elk Grove Village, IL 60007 312-228-1451
Artworx Software 1844 Penfield Rd. Penfield, NJ 14526 716-385-6120	Electronic Arts Box 7577 San Mateo, CA 94403 800-245-4525	Lucasfilm Games Box 2009 San Rafael, CA 94912 415-662-1800	PBI Software 1163 Triton Dr. Foster City, CA 94404 415-349-8765	Taito 267 West Esplanade North Vancouver, B.C. V7M1A5 604-984-3344
Atari 1196 Borregas Sunnyvale, CA 94086 408-745-4851	Epyx Box 8020 Redwood City, CA 94063 415-366-0606	Lyric Software 6 Beach Plum Dr. Northport, NY 11768 800-243-0345	PSI 2 N. Highview Ave. Nanuet, NY 10954 914-623-2245	Tengen 1901 McCarthy Blvd. Milpitas, CA 95035 408-435-2650
Avalon Hill 4517 Harford Rd. Baltimore, MD 21214 800-638-9292	FCI 150 E. 52nd St. New York, NY 10022 212-753-8100	Masterplay 8417 Sun State St. Tampa, FL 33614 813-888-7773	Polarware/Penguin 1055 Paramount Pkwy. #A Batavia, IL 60510 800-323-0884	Three-Sixty Pacific 2105 S. Bascom #290 Campbell, CA 95008 408-879-9144
Bandai America 12951 East 166th St. Cerritos, CA 90701 213-926-0947	FTL 6160 Lusk Blvd. C-206 San Diego, CA 92121 619-453-5711	Mastertronic/Melbourne House 711 West 17th St. Unit G9 Costa Mesa, CA 92627 714-631-1001	Rainbird 2350 Bayshore Pkwy. Mountainview, CA 94043 415-322-0412	Titus 20432 Corisco St. Chatsworth, CA 91311 818-709-3693
Baudville 5380 52nd St. S.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49508 616-988-0888	Final Frontier Software 18307 Burbank Blvd. #108 Tarzana, CA 91356 818-996-0431	MicroIllusions 17408 Chatsworth St. Granada Hills, CA 91344 800-522-2041	Romstar, Inc. 22857 Lockness Ave. Torrance, CA 90501 213-539-2744	Velocity 1200 Gough St. Suite 210 San Francisco, CA 94109 312-606-7133
Beeshu Inc. 101 Wilton Ave. Middlesex, NJ 08846 201-968-6868	First Row Software 900 E. 8th Ave. #300 King of Prussia, PA 19406 215-337-1500	Microprose Software 180 Lakefront Dr. Hunt Valley, MD 21030 800-645-8632	Scorpion Software 10475 Perry Way #G-103 Wexford, PA 15090 412-935-5066	Vic Tokai Inc. 370 Amapola Ave. #104 Torrance, CA 90501 213-320-1199
Blue Lion Software 90 Sherman St. Cambridge, MA 02140 617-876-2500	GDW Box 1646 Bloomington, IL 61702 309-452-3632	Mindcraft 2341 205th St. #102 Torrance, CA 90501 213-320-5214	Sega 5730 Forbes Blvd. San Francisco, CA 94080 415-742-9300	XOR Corp. 5421 Opportunity Ct. Minnetonka, MN 55343 612-938-0005
Britannica Software 345 Fourth St. San Francisco, CA 94107 415-546-1856				

GAME RATING SUMMARY

NAME	PUBLISHER	RATING
Dungeon Master	FTL Games	9.65
Solitaire Royale	Spectrum HoloByte	9.50
Red Storm Rising	Microprose	9.50
Legend of BlackSilver	Epyx	9.36
Hybris	Discovery	9.30
Superstar Ice Hockey	Mindscape	9.28
ULTIMA V	Origin Systems	9.25
Bard's Tale III	Interplay Products	9.25
Nobunaga's Ambition	Koei	9.15
Space M*A*X 2.1	Final Frontier	9.15
Where in Europe is Carmen Sandiego?	Broderbund	9.10
Battlehawks 1942	Lucasfilm	9.04
Zak McCracken/Alien Mindbenders	Lucasfilm Games	8.90
TV Football	Cinemaware	8.90
Shufflepuck Cafe	Broderbund	8.90
Questron II	SSI	8.90
PHM Pegasus	Lucasfilm Games	8.85
Flight Simulator 3.0	MicroSoft	8.75
The Three Stooges	Cinemaware	8.75
4X4 OffRoad Racing	Epyx	8.75
GFL Football	Gamestar/Medienagenic	8.72
Battle Chess	Interplay	8.70
Jordan vs. Bird: One on One	Electronic Arts	8.64
Hellcat Ace	Microprose	8.60
Death Sword	Palace/Epyx	8.60
GBA Basketball	Gamestar/Medienagenic	8.52
Tetris	Spectrum HoloByte	8.50
The Games: WinterEdition	Epyx	8.50
Police Quest	Sierra On-Line	8.50
Tau Ceti	Thunder Mountain	8.45
Decisive Battles of the Cival War	SSG	8.40
Shadowgate	Mindscape	8.40
Super Sunday	Avalon Hill	8.40
Jam Session	Broderbund	8.35
Falcon F-16	Spectrum HoloByte	8.30
Project Stealth Fighter	Microprose	8.25
Rommel	SSG	8.20
Typhoon of Steel	SSI	8.15
Wasteland	Electronic Arts	8.15
Takedown	Gamestar	8.15
Tomahawk	DataSoft	8.11
Neurobics	Ocean Isle	8.03
Pete Rose Pennant Fever	Gamestar/Medienagenic	8.00
Zoom!	Discovery	8.00
Awesome Arcade Action	Arcadia	7.90
Global Commander	DataSoft	7.85
Starglider II	Rainbird	7.85
Hardball!	Accolade	7.78
Platoon	Data East	7.75
Empire	Interstel	7.74
Top Gun	Thunder Mountain	7.63
Solo Flight	Microprose	7.59
Sons of Liberty	SSI	7.50
John Elway's Quarterback	Melbourne House	7.50
Gunship	Microprose	7.48
World Class Leader Board Golf	Access	7.40
Sporting News Baseball	Epyx	7.35
Ace of Aces	Accolade	7.26
Rodwars	Arcadia	7.20
Romance of the Three Kingdoms	Koei	7.16
Leatherneck	Microdeal	7.15
A.C.E.	Spinnaker/UXB	6.76
Jinxter	Rainbird	6.75
Kid Niki	Data East	6.75
JET	subLogic	6.58
Final Assault	Epyx	6.50
Hunt for Red October	DataSoft	6.47
NFL Challenge	XOR	6.40
Pro Challenge	XOR	6.24
Indiana Jones	Mindscape	6.20
Ebonstar	MicroIllusions	5.25
VIDEO TITLES		
The Legend of Zelda	Nintendo	9.13
Double Dragon	Tradewest	7.98
RBI Baseball	Tengen	7.68
Contra	Konami	7.63

The COMPUTER PLAY SCORECARD

One of the unique features of our magazine is the patented COMPUTER PLAY Scorecard. In order for you to be able to utilize it fully, we will explain the definitions of the various categories and give details on the final CP RATING.

NAME: This is the specific name found on the game package.

TYPE: We will attempt to specify the category of game being reviewed. Choices include ARCADE, ADVENTURE, TEXT, SIMULATION, TRADITIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, CREATIVITY, STRATEGY, and CARTRIDGE.

FORMATS: The currently available formats will be listed. Normally, we will also note the version of the game that was used for the review.

PUBLISHER: The company which created the game.

DISTRIBUTOR: The company that actually sells the game.

DESIGNERS: The individuals who designed the game.

AGES: The suggested age range for which the game is appropriate.

OF PLAYERS: The number of players who can play at one time.

THE RATINGS

ABILITY LEVEL: Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced. Our reviewers are instructed to rate this from the viewpoint of the average gamer.

REQUIREMENTS: Specific hardware or memory requirements beyond the minimum computer system for a specific format.

PRICE: The manufacturer's suggested retail price.

PACKAGING: Are the materials slick and colorful? Does the package look professional? Are "bonus" items provided to enhance the game experience?

DOCUMENTATION: Are the instructions clear and understandable? Are all game situations covered? Are all necessary player aids or maps provided?

GRAPHICS/TEXT: Are the screen graphics clean and colorful? Do they add to the game? Do the graphics take full advantage of the machine's capabilities? For text games, was the story exciting and imaginative? This category includes sound and animation.

REALISM: This category is for vehicle simulations, war games, and traditional games (such as chess). Does the game faithfully recreate the "look and feel" of the events being simulated? Are the statistics or historical facts correct? Did the game give you a true experience?

PLAYABILITY: The big one. Did the game hold your interest? Did you play for hours or get bored quickly? Did the game draw you into another world? Would you immediately want to show the game to a friend. Did the game break new ground in design? Did you want to play it again the next day? Despite the fact that there are five categories in the rating process, you will note that a game will never get a truly good rating without getting a good score for playability.

THE NUMBERS
As you will note when reading a SCORECARD, each reviewer rates the game in each category and assigns a text and numerical rating.

A formula is then applied to the various ratings in order to reach the final CP RATING, the reviewer's overall rating of the game.

The percentages for each category are: PACKAGING-10% DOCUMENTATION-15% GRAPHICS/TEXT-25% REALISM-25% PLAYABILITY-50%.

Yes, the percentages add up to 125%. This is because some games can only be rated for GRAPHICS but not for REALISM (such as PAC-MAN). Others can be rated for both but one category is more important than another. In these cases the 25% is split. FLIGHT SIMULATOR might be rated 10% for GRAPHICS and 15% for REALISM.

The breakdown in percentages to each category is subjective but represents our best efforts to assign a single rating for every game. We feel that every category is important. The game may be great but cheap packaging may detract from the overall value.

READER INPUT
We give you the ratings for each category. If your own desires are different than ours then you can still work out your own formula. Perhaps you are totally uninterested in packaging. Then you can simply focus on the other category ratings.

YOU CAN'T TELL THE PLAYERS WITHOUT A ...
The actual space taken up by the scorecards is small but they are an essential part of this magazine. The credibility of our reviewers and the magazine itself rides on the scorecards. We want a casual reader to be able to quickly spot the winners and losers each month. We welcome suggestions on how this process can be improved and standardized. Each issue will contain a summary of all ratings from previous issues.

Snapshots

By Daniel Carr



CHOO CHOO

THE TRAIN: ESCAPE TO NORMANDY is a fast paced WWII rail simulation in which you must take over a German occupied train loaded with the art treasures of France and get it to Normandy before the Germans can smuggle it to Berlin. Getting there won't be easy. You must frequently stop at stations (which could be enemy held) to resupply and watch for ambushes along the way. Fighters, gunboats, traps and sabotage will keep you busy every mile. IBM, C64, ACCOLADE. Circle Reader Service Number 1.



BIONIC SLAUGHTER

The future is not a happy place in **BIONIC COMMANDO**. The world is constantly enduring the ruthless onslaught of attacking forces. Only one soldier with the most impeccable and technically advanced bionics ever developed can rise to god-like proportions to become an unstoppable juggernaut bashing it's way into the enemy's fortress and ending this mess once and for all. CAPCOM. Circle Reader Service Number 4.



MARITANS

In **MARS SAGA**, Mars is colonized and convicts are used to mine the planet for it's resources. You play Tom Jetland, a roughish type trying to find out what happened to the farthest outpost, Pro-

scenium. This science fiction role-playing game has top-down 3D animation, automapping, complex combat and involved character generation with 21 different skills to learn. There are many gadgets to find and monsters to fight as you adventure across the planet. C64/128. ELECTRONIC ARTS. Circle Reader Service Number 9.



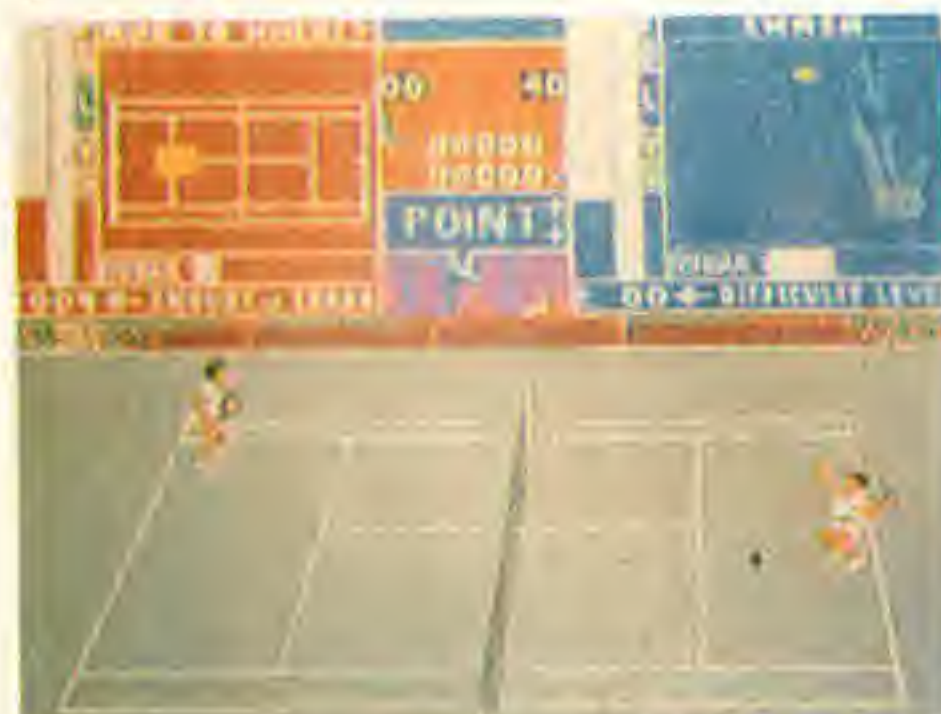
FINAL FRONTIER

The classic game **REACH FOR THE STARS** is in its third edition for the Amiga. Up to four human and/or computer players start out with a small colony and must build it into an empire. The game is heavy into economics; each player must manage his planet's economy well in order to build ships and conquer the galaxy. The game features many play options and four levels of play with an enhanced veteran mode to make it really tough. The game is not copy protected. Amiga, Mac, C64/128, Apple II series. STRATEGIC STUDIES GROUP. Circle Reader Service Number 7.



MEOW

He's the big bad fur ball **STREET CAT** and he's on the prowl. In this arcade style game "kitty" goes through four events. For the first event there's the inner-city obstacle course. The next event consists of jumping across floating platforms in a swimming pool and knocking geometric shapes off a high board. The third event is a narrow "catwalk" that must be traversed; watch out for the slimy pipes and rats below. The last event is a bowling match against a bully bulldog using each other as pins. Amiga, EPYX. Circle Reader Service Number 8.



MATCH POINT

Compete in international tennis with **SERVE & VOLLEY**. Select from a list of ranked players or create your own. Each player has his own stats along with strengths and weakness. Lots of features and detail are included: stroke selection, ball placement, different serves, three difficulty levels and three courts to choose from. Also included are five different hits: volley, forehand, smash, lob, and backhand. IBM, C64/128. ACCOLADE. Circle Reader Service Number 2.



KUNG FU

In **KARATEKA**, the nasties have torched your village, scattered your friends and family and worst of all, kidnapped your bride to be. So, it's off to the evil warlord's castle where your bride is held captive and kick some butt. Use the keyboard or joystick to kick and punch your way through the castle guards, defeat the warlord and rescue your bride. Smooth 3D animation and digitized sound keep the arcade action fast. Atari ST and 8 bit, Apple II series, IBM, C64/128. Circle Reader Service Number 6.



TAKE SWORDS

In **TIMES OF LORE**, the land of Albareth is being ravaged by outlaws and rival lords battling for control of the land.

Twenty years ago the king and his young son disappeared, leaving the land in turmoil. You get to play the soldier of fortune battling assassins, wizards and monsters while questing for fame and fortune. The game is a blend of arcade and fantasy role-playing with rich 3D animated graphics and sound. You can explore 45 different buildings including cities, towers and dungeons and meet 60 character types. C64/128, Apple II series. Circle Reader Service Number 5.



EPIC ROLE-PLAYING

DEATHLOARD takes place in the land of Lorn, capital of the Kodan Empire. The Deathloard wants it all for himself and has besieged Lorn. The player must create six parties that represent the last hope to save the kingdom. The game includes 157 dungeon levels, 128 different monsters, 16 continents and 84 magic spells. There are eight character races, from human to troll, to play, each with 16 classes from fighter to wizards to choose from. There are thousands of locations to explore including cities, temples, forests, tundra, polar bears and tumbleweeds. C64/128, Apple II series. ELECTRONIC ARTS. Circle Reader Service Number 10.



RACK 'EM UP

Hustle pool with **RACK'EM** an arcade style simulation. Choose between snooker, bumper-ball, 8-ball, 9-ball, standard 15 or customize your own game. You can call your pocket, control your shot power and put english on the ball. Play with the program's trick shots or make your own and save your ten best to disk. The program gives you a top-down 3D animated view of the action. C64/128, IBM. Circle Reader Service Number 3.

30

enemy, there is a small gauge at the bottom of the screen which lets you know how many wacks with your sword it's going to take to kill him or it. Your strength controls how heavy a blow you can do. In other words, the higher your strength the less wacks it takes to kill something.

Magic items are found as you make your way to the wizard. A potion will either give you more strength or an extra life. A "Zapper" will kill just about everything on the screen at once so be careful with this one. Lastly, a "Shield" will protect you for about 30 seconds. Note that potions are taken immediately and that you can only carry any combination of four Shields and Zappers.

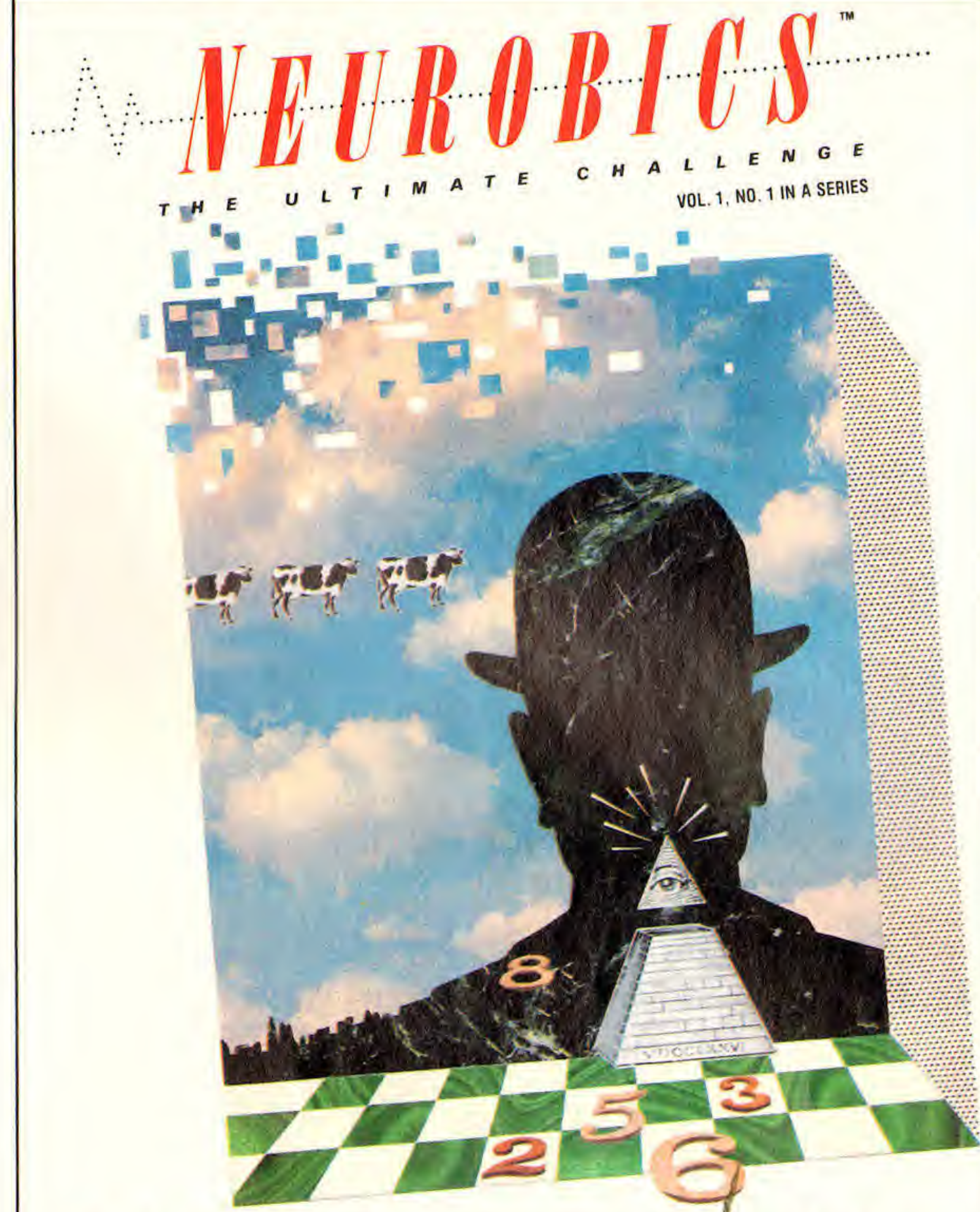
The monsters are very well done graphically and animate nicely if not comically. The city guards are tough with their spears and axes, and the castle "guards" attack with magic fire bolts. There are these fat dudes on some kind of pogo sticks, zombies that will throw up in your face if you don't duck and a very weird climatic sequence in the wizard's tower that I still can't figure out. No, I haven't killed the wizard yet.

SWORD OF SODAN is an excellent game. The four megabytes (on three disks) has a lot to keep you busy. On the Amiga, in which this game is being reviewed, the graphics and sound are arcade quality. The action (animation) is fast and the digitized sound is equally good.

Name: SWORD OF SODAN
Type: Arcade
Format: Amiga
Publisher: Discovery Software
Designers: Soren Gronbech & Torben B. Larsen
Ages: 10 & Above
Requirements: 512K, Joystick
Players: One
Price: \$49.95

Ability Level: Intermediate
Packaging: Very Good (9)
Documentation: Very Good (9)
Graphics/Text: Excellent (9.8)
Playability: Excellent (9.8)

CP RATING: 9.60
Circle Reader Service Number 31.



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Ocean Isle Software, Ocean Isle Square, Building 3, Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28459

Circle Reader Service Number 33.

Coming Attractions

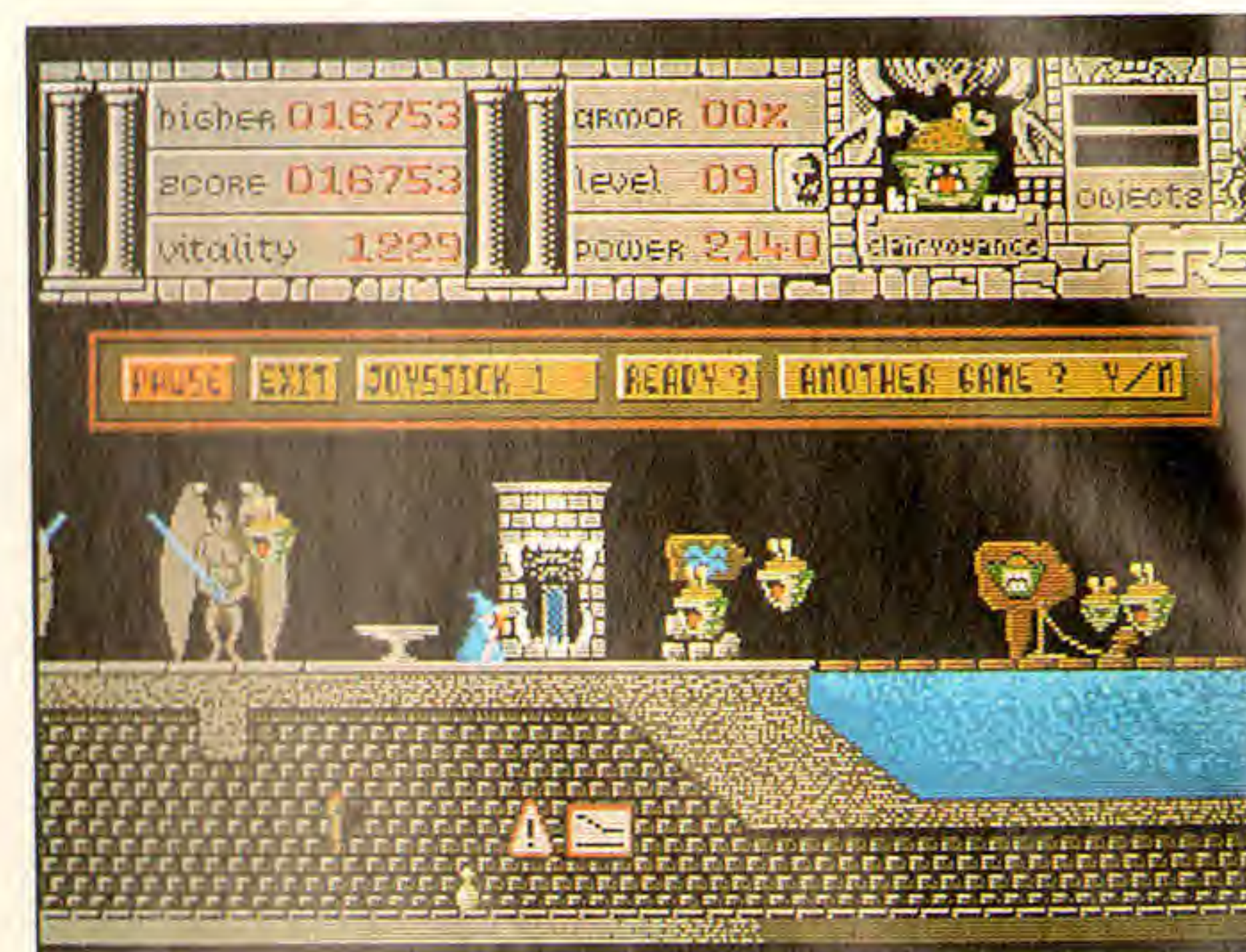
What's up for March? We don't have a special section so we have more room for a greater variety of game reviews.

For our sports fans, there's Strategic Sports Football by Epyx. Karateka from 360 Pacific isn't exactly sports, but it's an old favorite in a new format. Then for the golfer, there's Mini Putt from Accolade, a miniature golf simulator.

For the adventure minded we have a long list. Times of Lore, by Origin will be there. Space Station Oblivion from Epyx will be reviewed by Cheryl Peterson, she'll also review Zork Zero from Infocom. Warlock by 360 Pacific will be reviewed by Rusel DeMaria, who will also review Arcade Construction Kit from Broderbund.

For those who go to war, there's 688 Attack Sub from Electronic Arts. Then there's The Train from Accolade which is about escaping from Germany to France with a train load of French art that was stolen by the Nazis. Long awaited F-19 Stealth Fighter will get reviewed; it's from the Microprose, and it looks promising. Thud Ridge from 360 Pacific is a Viet Nam Jet fighter simulator.

Joker Poker from Joker Software comes to us from down under and it is a unique game. Buyers of this game can actually compete for



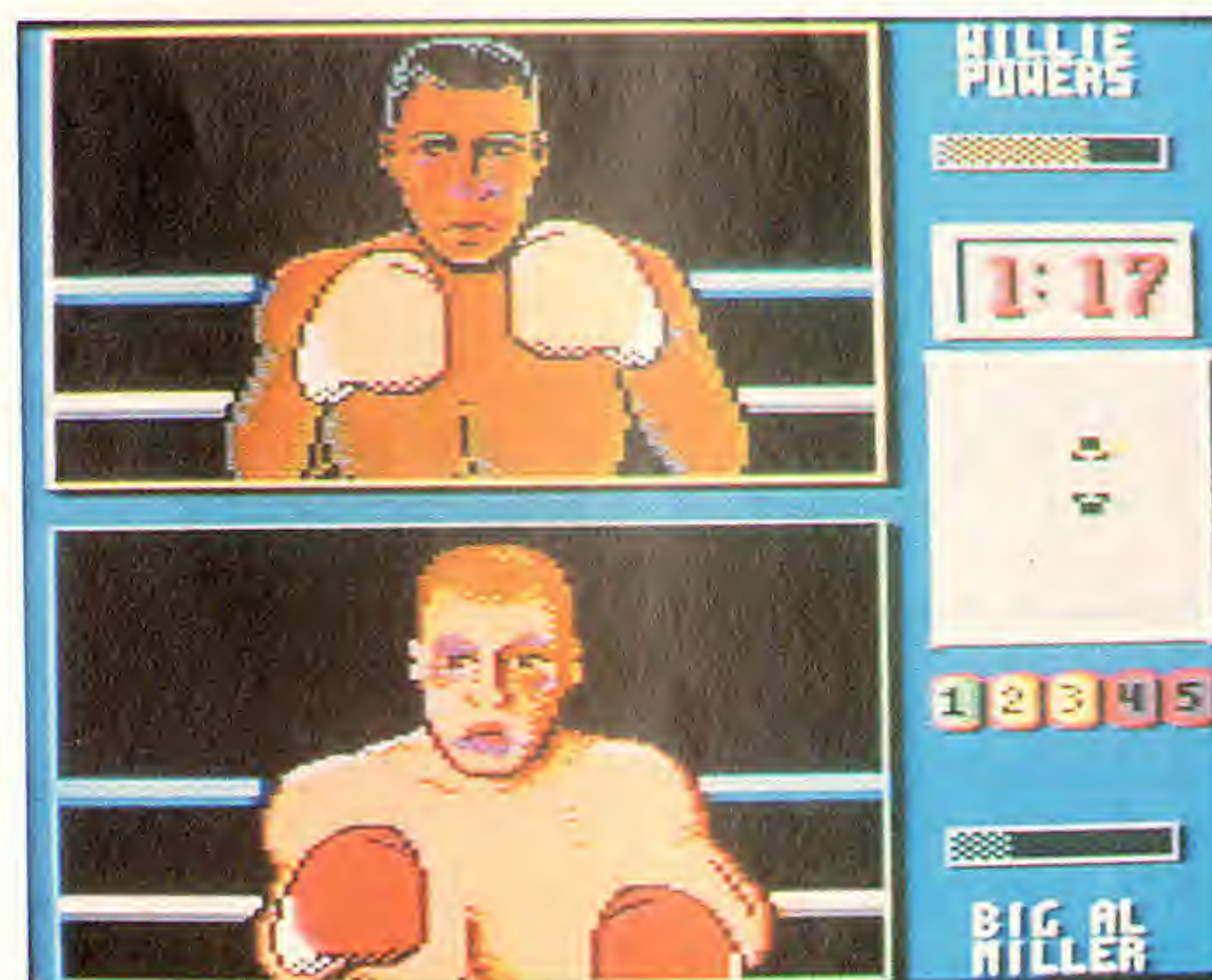
Warlock from 360 Pacific

prizes by sending in the disk which can hold top scores for the players. Corruption will take you behind the scenes of the gambling world, and this one's from Rainbird.

This is just a short list of what's coming in our March issue. The number of reviews per issue is on the rise and we're hard at work looking for the newest, and hottest games coming out on the market. So, pick up next month's issue and browse through it before you spend your money on a turkey.

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TKO from Accolade

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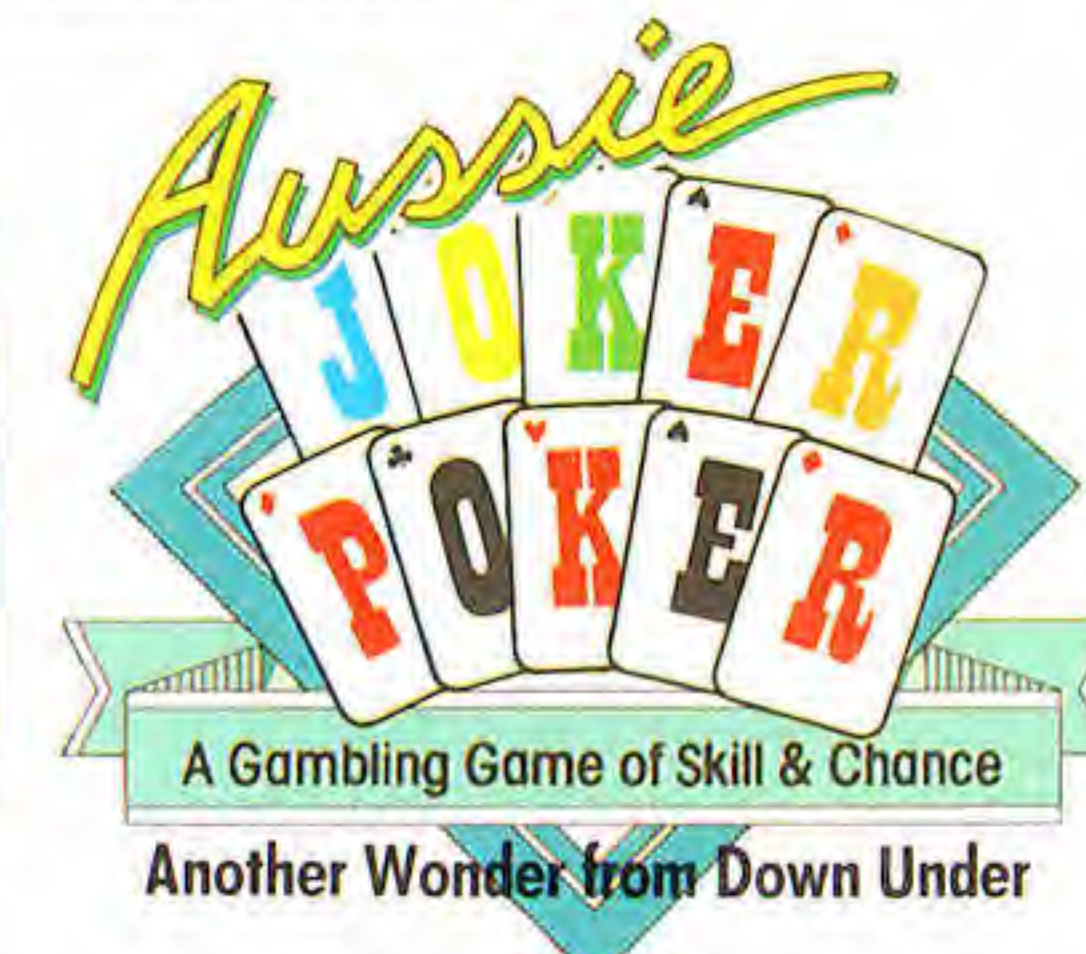
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2. Void where prohibited by state or federal law.
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4. Limit five entries per family or household. Five free entry forms and full contest rules are included with "Aussie Joker Poker" or may be obtained by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope larger than 5 1/2" x 7 1/2" with a hand written request to: Aussie Joker Poker Contest Entry Forms, P.O. Box 22381, Gilroy, CA 95021-2381. Mail-in requests limited to one per name, household or family and must be received no later than 3/31/89. WA & VT residents need not include return postage. Full rules also available from participating Mindscape retailers.
5. Monthly entries must be received no later than the last day of the month in which a drawing will take place in order to participate in the month's drawing. Drawings will be held from December, 1988 through April 1989, inclusive. Final entries must be received by 4/30/89.
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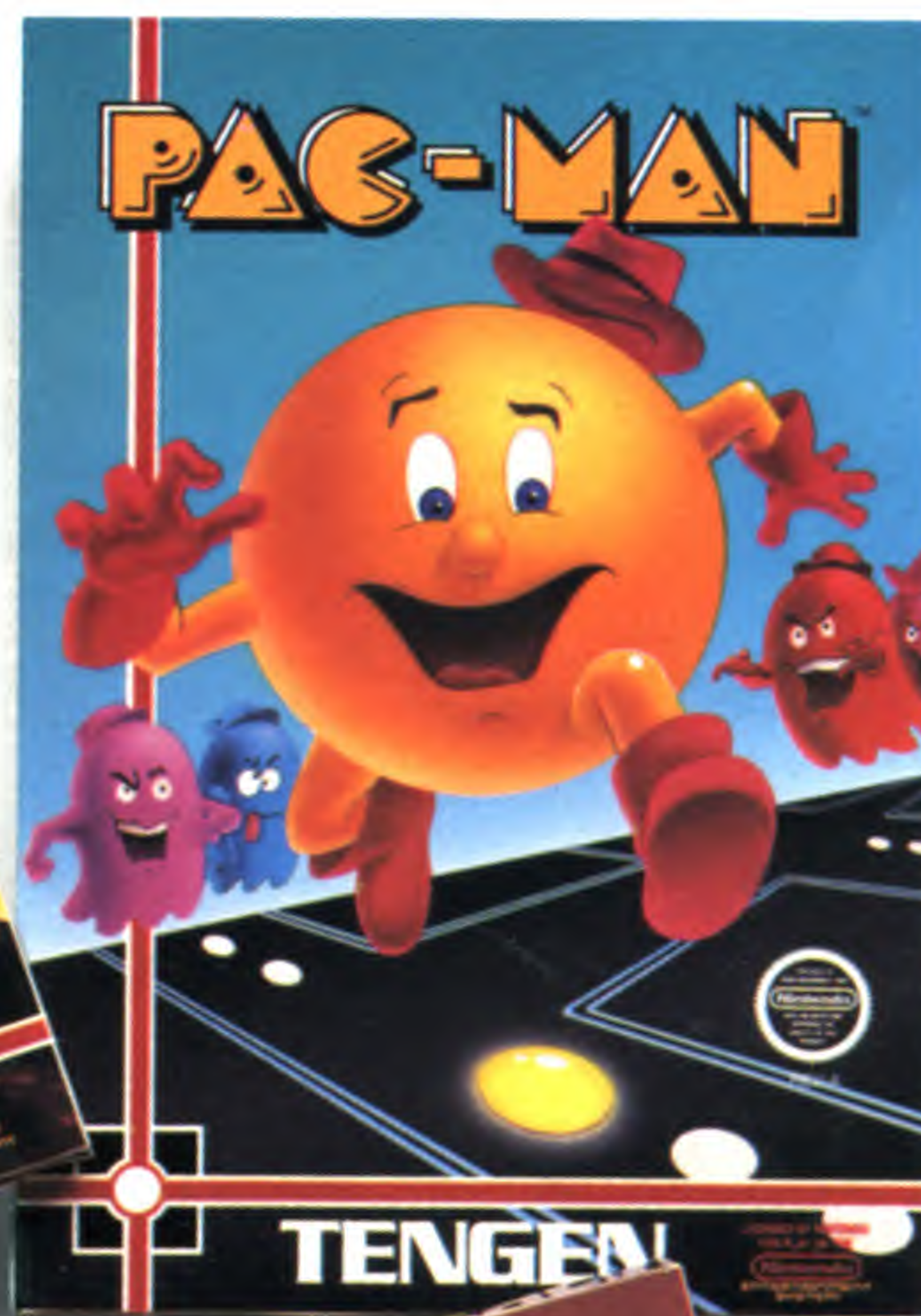


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